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PLUCK AND LUCK.

HAL HORTON'S GRIT; OR, A BOY FROM THE COUNTRY.

By ALLYN DRAPER.



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PLUCK AND LUCK

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HAL HORTON'S GRIT

OR,

A Boy From the Country

By **Allyn Draper**

CHAPTER I.

HAL HORTON LEAVES HOME TO MAKE HIS FORTUNE.

Hal Horton was a sturdy youth of seventeen years of age, living in the little country village of Buford. His mother was a poor widow who managed to eke out a scant living with her needle. He aided her all he could, and every penny he earned by doing odd jobs about the village he gave to her. But there was little work to do there even in the best of seasons, so he was really an expense in the long run. One day he said to her:

"Mother, I am old enough to support you, but I can't do it here. There is no work in Buford for me. Let me go away in search of work elsewhere."

"Why, my child!" she exclaimed. "Where would you go? And how can you go when you haven't a dollar in the world?"

"I'll go to New York, mother. There's plenty of work there. Don't worry about how I'll get there. I have two sound legs, a clear head, and stout heart."

She looked at her boy—her only treasure in all the wide world, and tears came into her eyes as she thought of his going out alone to struggle for himself.

"I don't know how I could do without you, Hal," she said. "You are a comfort to me, though at times we have but little to eat."

"Yes—I know, mother, but I am old enough now to strike out for myself. There's nothing for me to do here, and I am tired loafing around waiting for a chance to make a half dollar or a quarter—sometimes but a nickel. I must go, mother. I can't stay here and see you working with your needle while I do nothing."

So he talked her into it, and she gave her consent for him to go. He had but little preparations to make, for he could carry in a little bundle all he had in the world in the way of clothes. She fixed them up for him, and one morning, just as the sun was peeping over the hills he left the village on foot, his bundle hanging to a stout cudgel which he held over his shoulder, accompanied by his dog Tige.

That dog was the one pet of the boy's. He was the only piece of property he had ever owned, and the bond of friendship between the two was like that between two human brothers.

"Tige, old boy," said Hal, "we're off to—goodness only

knows where. But we'll stick together, let come what will. If I get anything to eat you will, too. We've got to look out for ourselves now, and nothing but clear grit can pull us through. You've got plenty of that, I know, but I don't know whether I have or not."

The dog was a cross between a mastiff and an English bulldog, and was given to him when a little puppy by a man for whom he had worked two years before. They had been inseparable companions ever since. The dog understood him with almost human intelligence, and Hal often talked to him as to another boy.

They had tramped about ten miles along the dusty road when they were overtaken by two men in a buggy, and a big dog trotting along under it. Of course, the two dogs began to growl and bristle up on meeting.

"Come away, Tige," said Hal, and Tige obeyed, returning to rub his head against his master's leg. But the other dog, almost twice his size, followed him up and wanted to fight.

"Better call your dog off, mister," said Hal. "He might get hurt."

The man laughed—the one who held the reins—and said:

"Oh, I guess not."

"Yes, he will—call him off," repeated Hal.

"Well, if he can lick my dog I'll give you fifty dollars for him," said the man in the buggy.

"I ain't selling my dog for all the money in the world. I don't want him to hurt your dog or to get hurt, either."

The big dog kept growling and bristling up as though he wanted to eat up both Tige and his master.

"Say, mister! If you don't want to have your dog chewed up you'd better call him off."

"See here, my lad," laughed the man in the buggy, "I'll give you five dollars to let 'em fight," and he reached into his pocket for the money. Hal was about to refuse and again ask him to call off his dog, when the two sprang at each other.

"Well, it isn't my fault," said Hal, getting out of the way of the two enraged canines. They rolled out into the middle of the road and raised a cloud of dust. They didn't make very much noise, for neither was of the yelping sort. The horse reared and the two men sprang out and held him by the bit.

Hal stood quietly by gazing at what he could not prevent,

but was in no way worried about Tige. He had seen him whip every dog in Buford, and all that came in from the country round about the village. The big dog, however, was strong and game, and several times had Tige under him. Then they would change positions and Tige would be uppermost.

Suddenly the big dog yelped and began trying to get away, but Tige was not done with him. He went in to chew him up, and it looked as though he would succeed.

"Here! Call your dog off!" exclaimed the owner of the other one, handing Hal five dollars. "I don't want my dog killed."

"Hold up, Tige! Come off!" cried Hal in commanding tones, and Tige released his grip on his foe, who went limping away to a refuge under the buggy.

"I told you he'd chaw him up," said Hal, as he patted Tige's head.

"Yes, but I didn't believe he could do it," frankly admitted the other.

"Well, I knew he could. Tige is clear grit all through. Whenever he runs up against a dog he can't lick he'll die right there. He'll never holler enough."

"What'll you take for him?"

"Nothing, sir. A fellow who would sell his dog would sell his brother."

"Oh, that's all sentiment. Men sell their horses, cows, and anything they have, when they can get their prices."

"I've no price on Tige. You may be a rich man, sir, but you haven't money enough to buy him from me. Tige wouldn't sell me—and I wouldn't sell him."

"I'll give you one hundred dollars for him," said the man, "and throw in my dog. What do you say to that?" and the other reached for his pocket as he spoke.

"No, sir; not for a thousand," and Hal stooped and patted Tige's head as he refused the offer.

"Well, I'm not paying any thousand dollars for dogs."

"Nor am I selling my dog at any price, sir. He is all I have in the world, sir. The five dollars you just gave me is all the money I have. I am going out in the world to make my way as best I can, but I'll never sell to another the best friend I have on earth—except my mother—even to save myself from starving to death by the roadside. I raised Tige from a little pup. He has slept with me, ate with me, fought for me, and he would die for me!"

"Give me your hand, my lad!" exclaimed the companion of the owner of the other dog, reaching out his hand to Hal. "I like a man who stands by his friends," and he shook his hand warmly as he spoke.

"Well, so do I," said the other, "but all the same I'd like to own that dog. I'll make it one hundred and fifty dollars. What do you say to that? It would set you up in business anywhere."

"Tige and me are going to stick together till one of us dies, sir," said Hal.

The man looked at him in silence for a few moments, and then asked where he was going.

"I guess we'll fetch up in New York some day," Hal replied, "if I don't find work before we get there."

"Somebody will steal him from you in the city. There are regular dog thieves there, who make it their business to catch dogs and sell 'em again."

"They'll never take him alive. I won't sell him to you, but if you can take him without killing him you may have him."

"The deuce you say!" and the man looked at Tige wistfully.

"Yes, I mean it. If you can take him you may have him."

"You don't think I can do it?"

"I know you can't, mister. He'd tear you to pieces in two minutes."

"Better not try it, Henry," advised the other man. "I'd about as soon tackle a tiger."

"Oh, I can catch him with a noose," was the assertion of the would-be purchaser, going to the buggy to get a rope.

"Say, mister!" called out Hal, "he would tear you to pieces. Better not try it."

"Don't do it, Henry," said the other. "The boy is right. He knows the dog, and certainly would not give you the chance if he didn't know you couldn't take him."

"Well, I won't, but hanged if I don't believe I could noose him and drag him home with me."

They both entered the buggy and drove off, leaving Hal and Tige behind.

"Tige, old boy!" exclaimed Hal, patting the faithful animal on the head, "you are clear grit. Sorry you got hurt, but it was forced on you. You put five dollars in my pocket—more money than I ever had at one time in all my life. When we find a butcher's shop you shall have a hunk of beef."

CHAPTER II.

TIGE AND THE TRAMPS.

Hal and Tige resumed their tramp along the highway. Both seemed lighter of heart. Hal had five dollars in his pocket, and Tige had just licked another dog twice his size. Why should they not feel happy? Hal felt rich when he looked at that five dollar bill and thought how it would sustain him till he could get something to do.

Suddenly he stopped, and seemed to be in deep thought. Tige looked up at him inquiringly.

"Tige, old boy, I forgot. We must send some of this money home to mother," said Hal. "We can't forget her, you know. But I don't know what she'll think when I tell her you earned it the first day we were out. You know what a row she made when you chawed up Tom Madden's dog. She doesn't approve of fighting by either man or beast. But then the other dog jumped on you, didn't he? It wasn't your fault or mine; but didn't you just give it to him! Grit wins in the end, Tige, and you've got plenty of that. Don't know whether I have or not, but you have proved it to me that it's the one thing that wins."

They tramped on several miles further and came to a farmhouse where a well stood out near the road with a water-trough for stock.

"He's a good man who lives here," Hal said to himself. "This trough tells that. I'll draw up a bucketful and we'll have a drink, Tige."

While he was drawing the water from the well the farmer came out and spoke to him, asking:

"Whar be yer goin'?"

"To New York if I can't find work before I get there," Hal replied.

"Want work, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Waal, now, what kin yer do?"

"Almost anything—dig, hoe, plow, cut wood and other things."

"But they don't dig and plow and hoe down to York," said the farmer.

"No, but it's a bee hive of busy workers, and men or boys who are not afraid of work can find something to do, I guess."

"Waal, I know a young man who went thar last year an' was glad enough ter git back home alive. He came mighty nigh starvin' ter death. He said ther town was full of men lookin' for work an' couldn't git it."

"Yes, I heard that, too—read it in the papers many a time—and yet there's work there, and in Buford there isn't. I can stand a better chance in New York, because there's business there and plenty of money."

"Got any money ter live on till you git work?" the farmer asked.

Hal didn't want to let anyone know he had a cent of money. He was shrewd enough to know that such information was best when kept to himself.

"I've got to work my way, sir," he said, with a frankness that seemed to surprise the old farmer, who said:

"Waal, you be a big fool ter go to the city with no money."

"I would be a still greater one to stay where there is no work for me," Hal replied.

"Waal, I like yer grit," remarked the farmer. "Come in and have some dinner. I'll help yer on that much, anyhow."

"Thank you, sir. If you have anything I can do to pay for it, I'd rather do it than not."

"I ain't got nothin' to be done jes' now," said the farmer, as he led the way round to the rear of the house to the kitchen, where a couple of young girls, apparently fourteen and sixteen years of age, were busily assisting their mother with dinner.

The farmer told his wife the story he had gathered from Hal, and said he had offered to work out the price of a dinner.

"He's welcome to what we have," said the good wife.

"Thank you, madam," said Hal, putting down his bundle by the door. "I hope luck will come my way. If it does I'll show you how I can remember a kindness. You are just like my mother—she is good to everybody and everything."

The tall, gaunt old wife looked kindly at him and asked:

"And do you love her?"

"More than anyone else on earth," he replied. "She is a good mother, and I have tried to be a good son to her. I never earned a penny in my life that did not go to her."

"Have you no brothers or sisters?" she asked.

"No, ma'am. I am an only child. She has been a widow ten years."

The two girls looked on and listened in silence. The younger one was the more beautiful of the two. She had great brown eyes and a wealth of dark hair, with a face that beamed with sympathetic interest. He heard her mother call her Esther and the other Myra. Then he learned the farmer's name. It was Henderson.

When dinner was over, the younger sister asked him if she might feed his dog.

"Thank you. I guess he's hungry," he replied. She gathered up a big plate full of scraps and took it out to the porch where Tige was waiting. He wagged his tail in gratitude for the feast and fell to devouring it. When he had finished the scraps Hal said to him:

"Shake hands with the young lady, Tige. She is good to us."

To her surprise Tige reached out his right paw to her.

"Oh, my!" she laughed, taking the paw in her hand and shaking it. "You have trained him well."

"He understands nearly everything I say to him," said Hal.

"Is he a good yard dog?"

"He is one of the best in the world, sir," replied Hal, "and no one can pass him when he is on guard. I can sleep out anywhere and he'll watch over me."

"Wouldn't sell him, eh?" the farmer asked.

"No, sir; not at any price."

When he was ready to leave, the younger of the two sisters gave him a lunch wrapped in an old newspaper, saying:

"There's something in it for the dog, too."

"Thank you, thank you. I won't forget you. I heard your mother call you Esther. I'll remember that name. It is a good old name from the Bible. I guess it fits you all right. Good-by. Some day I'll see you again—if we both live," and he shook hands with her and took up his bundle. The next moment he and Tige were again on the road, going in the direction of the great city.

They soon reached a little village, where Hal had the five-dollar bill changed into smaller bills and coins, so he would not have to show more money than necessary when making a purchase of any kind. Then he bought a pair of shoes, as his feet were pretty well on the ground, as he wore the old ones. He wanted to avoid appearing like a tramp when he entered the city, and as his clothes and hat were in good repair and clean, his shoes were not.

"I guess I don't look so much like a tramp now," he said to himself, as he resumed his journey. "People look upon tramps as men who won't work when they have a chance, and so it goes hard when a fellow is looked upon as one. When they come through Buford everybody sneers at them, and watches them till they leave."

A couple of miles beyond the village he met two tramps, who were lying under a tree in the shade. They looked at him for a few moments, and then one of them hailed him with:

"Whar you goin', pard?"

"To New York," he replied.

"What for?"

"To look for work."

"Work! What kin yer do?"

"I can do a good many things, and will take any sort of job I can get."

"Well, we tried it, an' it won't go, pard," and the spokesman slowly rose to his feet and shuffled over across the road to where Hal had stopped. "Whatcher got in this?" and he took the bundle off the stick on which it had been swinging.

"It's a few clothes—say! let it alone!" and Hal reached out and attempted to snatch it away from him. The tramp aimed a blow at him with his fist. Hal dodged it, and the next moment the faithful Tige went for the hobo.

A yell of terror told that the fierce attack by the dog was a thing not calculated on by the tramp. They rolled over on the ground, and the other tramp, who was still lying under the tree, sprang up and seizing a stone, dashed over to the assistance of his comrade.

"Here, Tige!" called Hal, and the dog obeyed him promptly.

"Oh, lemme smash 'im!" yelled the man with the stone, hurling it at Tige with all his might.

"Chaw him, Tige!" called Hal, and Tige flew at him.

They rolled over together and the yells of the tramp were about the best he could put up.

"Here, Tige!" and again the dog obeyed, going over and standing by Hal.

The two hoboes rose to their feet yelling that they'd kill the dog.

"No, you won't," said Hal. "If I tell him to he'll tear you to pieces."

But they gathered stones and began hurling them at both. Hal dodged and called out:

"Chaw 'em, Tige!"

Then ensued a battle royal which lasted about ten minutes. By that time the two hoboes were in full retreat, and yelling:

"Call 'im off! Call 'im off!"

"Here, Tige!"

Tige returned to him and Hal patted him on the head, saying:

"Good boy. You're clear grit all through."

CHAPTER III.

IN THE CITY.

Hal went on his way, wondering what he would have done if Tige had not been with him. That he would have been beaten and robbed he did not for a moment doubt.

"And to think of selling such a friend!" he said to himself, as he trudged along the road. "I would die first."

That night he decided it was cheaper to sleep in a hay-mow

than pay for lodgings at a farm-house, so he crept into one after eating the lunch put up for him by little Esther Henderson. He had not been asleep very long when Tige's growls told him that somebody was about besides himself. He peeped out and listened. A couple of tramps wanted lodgings in the same hotel, but Tige, as the landlord for that night, refused them accommodation. They went away, thinking the dog was there by device of the farmer, and Hal had the house to himself.

He met with a number of adventures during the next day which would be of little interest to the reader to relate. On the third day he entered the city. He had never been in New York before, but he had read so much about the city, and had talked with people who had often visited there, he felt a great deal less out of place than he thought he would. He trudged on down a long street, looking about him in every direction as he went, Tige keeping close at his heels.

Seeing a policeman on a corner, lazily swinging his club, he went up to him, and said:

"Mr. Officer, I am just in from the country in search of work. Can you tell me where I can find something to do?"

The bluecoat looked him over for a few moments and then said:

"There's thousands upon thousands looking for work here in this city, my lad. There isn't work for all. You had better go back to the country about as fast as you came—unless you have money enough to pay your way."

"There's no work in the country, either, so I can't be any worse off here," said Hal.

"Where did you come from?"

"Buford, sir."

"Buford? Where is Buford?"

Hal told him, and the officer asked him why he left there.

"Because I could not make a living there."

"What is your trade?"

"Anything I can get to do."

The officer whistled.

He knew what was in store for such a youth, and again advised him to go back home.

"No, sir," and Hal shook his head. "I am going to fight it out here, and if me and my dog can't make a living we can die together."

"Is that your dog?"

"Yes, sir."

"What were you thinking of when you brought him along?"

"I was thinking I'd have a good friend with me wherever I went," he replied.

"Well, he'll get you into trouble if you are not careful. The city is no place for dogs unless they are owned by people who can take care of them."

"Oh, Tige can take care of himself," Hal said, and he told how he had licked a dog twice his size, and put two tramps to flight. The officer laughed, and took quite a fancy to both the boy and the dog.

"You'll want a place to sleep to-night," he said, "if you don't find any work. Come to the — street station-house, and ask for Officer Meade before ten o'clock. I'll be there and see that you get a plank to sleep on."

"A plank!"

"Yes. We don't use feather beds in the summer time," and there was just a tinge of a smile on the officer's face as he made the remark.

"Thank you, sir," said Hal, turning away and wandering on down the street. He walked more than a mile, looking at the sights of the great city. Thousands of trucks, carts, express and delivery wagons were coming and going continuously, and he wondered why it was that in the midst of so much business a youth, strong, ambitious and willing to work should have any trouble in finding it.

Finally he saw a youth but little older than himself, standing on a corner looking at the passing throng. He went up to him and asked if he knew where he could find work. The youth sized him up at a glance, and asked:

"From the country?"

"Yes; just got in."

"Got any 'rocks'?"

"Rocks?"

"Yes—scads, you know."

"Scads! What's 'scads'?"

"The 'rhino'—'tin.'"

"Rhino! Tin!" and Hal looked at him inquiringly.

"Say, Country, have you got any money to put up?"

"No."

"You haven't, eh! Well, you'll have to have some to live in New York. Do you see that big white building down there in the next block?" and he pointed down the street as he asked the question.

"Yes," answered Hal.

"Well, that's a bank. Just go in there and tell the cashier you're just in from the country with no money, and that you want ten dollars for a week, and he'll give it to you and send you to a hotel, where you'll have to stay till the mayor finds a job for you."

The fellow walked away to the opposite corner, and Hal went on down toward the big white building, saying to himself:

"Oh, he thinks I am a greenhorn. They don't give money to strangers in any bank in the world. But I'll go in there and see what a bank is like, for I never was in one in my life. There's a crowd going in and out, so I guess they won't notice me at all."

He went across the street and entered the bank. Tige was close at his heels. People were coming and going, some bringing money to deposit, and others presenting checks and carrying away big wads of bills.

It was a strange, fascinating sight to him, and he stood back out of the way and watched men come and go to and from the cashier's window.

An old man with gold glasses across his nose, with white hair and mustache, came in and presented a check, receiving a big roll of bills for it, which he slipped into his coat pocket in a careless sort of way. Two men brushed up against him, and one deftly lifted the roll of bills out of the pocket and stowed it away in his own. Then they started out.

Hal was startled. He knew it was a theft and went up to the old gentleman and touched him on the arm.

"Your money was taken from your pocket, sir."

"Eh, what!" and he felt quickly for it. "Who took it?"

"That man going out the door there, sir!"

"Catch him!" gasped the old gentleman.

Hal dashed after the pickpocket, seized him by the arm out on the steps of the bank, and said:

"Wait a moment, sir!"

The fellow dashed away.

"Catch him, Tige!" and Tige made a bound for him.

CHAPTER IV.

HAL AND TIGE CATCH A PICKPOCKET.

The sarcastic youth who sent Hal into the bank to borrow ten dollars stood on the corner and gazed after him with a contemptuous sneer on his face. But when he saw him cross the street and enter the bank building he gave a chuckle and exclaimed:

"Blest if he hasn't gone in there! I'll go and see 'em fire 'im out!" and he wended his way down the street and stopped in front of the bank. He anticipated no end of fun in seeing the boy from the country led to the door and told to clear out and

keep away, and patiently waited during the time Hal remained in the building.

Suddenly he saw him run out and clutch a man's arm on the steps of the bank and speak to him. Then he saw the man pull loose from him and dart down the steps. The dog dashed after him and jumped on his back.

The next moment the man and the dog were rolling over on the pavement, the former yelling for help.

Of course a crowd instantly ran to the spot to assist a man attacked by a savage dog. Hal was among the first to reach him.

"Let go, Tige!" he called out, and Tige let go his hold and stood close by, ready to renew the fight at any moment.

A man assisted the pickpocket to his feet and asked:

"Are you hurt, sir?"

The pickpocket started off through the crowd, and yelled:

"Mad dog!"

A panic instantly seized upon the crowd, and men ran in every direction.

"Catch him, Tige!" cried Hal, and again the dog sprang forward and seized the villain before he had gone fifty feet. Hal was up with him in a moment.

"Stand off, Tige!" and Tige obeyed.

"Now you stand still, sir, and he won't hurt you."

"Lord, won't somebody kill him!" the fellow groaned.

Just then an officer came running up, revolver in hand, and sung out:

"Stand back till I kill him!"

Hal stooped and raised Tige in his arms, saying:

"Don't shoot my dog, sir."

"Here! Where is the thief?" cried the tall, gray-haired man, rushing up to Hal.

"There he is, sir," and he pointed to the pickpocket as he spoke.

The old man grabbed him and said, hoarse with rage:

"You villain, you!"

"What's the trouble, sir?" the policeman asked.

"This man picked my pocket of a thousand dollars! That boy saw him, and set his dog to catch him!"

The officer looked at Hal, the thief and the dog, with a puzzled expression on his face.

"Are you going to arrest him?" the old man demanded.

"I guess you had all better go to the station with me," said the knight of the club.

"Well, see that he doesn't drop the money or pass it to another."

"It's in his right hand trouser pocket, sir," said Hal.

The old man thrust his hand into the thief's pocket, and pulled out a roll of bills.

"Do you let a man rob another that way here in the street?" the thief asked the officer.

"No—I guess I'll take that money," and the officer grabbed the old man by the collar.

"Well, bring him along, too," said the gray-haired man.

"Yes, and the boy and the dog," and he caught hold of the pickpocket. The latter was so afraid of the dog he went along without protest.

"Come on, my lad," said the man who had been robbed. "I'll see you through."

By this time the street was blocked by a crowd of at least a thousand people. It was difficult for the officer to clear a passage, but two other officers came to his assistance.

"Bring that boy and his dog along," he said to them.

"All right," and Hal was collared by one of them. Tige immediately showed his teeth, and was about to spring upon the officer, when Hal said:

"Let him alone, Tige!" and he quieted down instantly.

"Good dog that," said the officer. "Where did you get him?"

"Raised him, sir."

They started for the station, an immense crowd following them. At the station the arresting officer told of the disturbance on the street. The sergeant looked searchingly at the pickpocket, and said:

"I know you, my fine fellow. It's the same old game."

"I have not been up to any game," protested the prisoner. "You take me for some other man."

"We'll see. Lock him up, Hogan," and he did so. Then the sergeant heard the old man's story. His name was Wolff, a very wealthy citizen. He asked that the judge of that district be sent for at once, saying he was well known to him. The sergeant sent round to the court-room for the judge, who had just adjourned court for the day, and he came around at once.

He knew Wolff well, and when he heard his story told him he could go without bail on condition that he appear against the pickpocket the next day.

"Of course I will. But how about my money?"

The officer had laid the roll of bills on the sergeant's desk.

"The sergeant will produce it in court to-morrow morning."

"Then count it and see how much it is. I drew one thousand dollars from the bank."

The sergeant counted the money in the presence of the judge.

"Just one thousand dollars, your honor."

"That's right," said the old man.

"And now, my lad," said the judge, turning to Hal, "you had better stay here and come to court to-morrow morning with the officer."

"Will I be locked up, sir?"

"Oh, no. You have done no wrong. All we want you for is to tell the court how you saw the prisoner take the money. You have no place to sleep, I guess, so you will be taken care of here. You can do that, eh, sergeant?"

"Yes, sir."

"Treat him well, sergeant," said the old man, "and I'll see what I can do for him to-morrow."

Hal was ill at ease, for he was never in a court-room in his life save when Justice of the Peace Emmons, back in Buford, held his little court. He looked at the sergeant and the other officers and wondered what they would do with him. One of the officers asked him how old the dog was, and he told him, after which they got to talking.

Of course, he told his story, and the officer told him that while there was an immense amount of work going on in the city, there were plenty of people on hand to attend to it—that it was hard, very hard, for an inexperienced man or boy to find a situation.

"I've got to find work of some kind," said Hal.

"What are you going to do with your dog?"

"Nothing. He goes with me wherever I go."

"But he'll give you a deal of trouble. If you find work you will have to board somewhere, and boarding-houses in the city won't take dogs."

"Tige and I will stick together," he said. "He's the best friend I have in the world except my mother. Even she can't love me any more than he does."

"Better get rid of him," said the officer. "You could probably sell him for ten dollars."

"I was offered one hundred and fifty dollars two days ago. I wouldn't take one thousand dollars for him. Why, he just saved one thousand dollars for that old man by catching the thief who stole his money."

"Yes, so he did, but we don't use dogs for that purpose here in the city. You seem to have him under good control."

"Yes, sir. Even in a hot fight he will let go when I tell him to," and then he proceeded to show how well trained Tige was by putting him through a number of tricks he had taught

him. He laid down at the word of command, rolled over and over, closed his eyes, pretending to be asleep, walked on his two forefeet, then on his hind feet, growled and barked to order, played leap-frog with Hal, and did other things that won the admiration of all the men in the station.

"Say, Horton," said the sergeant, "when you go upon the stand to tell your story to-morrow, you'll have to hold up your hand and swear to tell the truth. Make your dog stand up by you and hold up his right paw at the same time. It'll just tickle the judge to death."

CHAPTER V.

HAL AND TIGE IN COURT.

Hal spent the night at the station-house, where they gave him a good bed and plenty to eat. He was virtually a prisoner, but was not made to feel so. Tige was permitted to stay in the same room with him all night.

The next morning he went to the police court, with the pick-pocket, as a witness against him. Tige was right at his heels. Mr. Wolff, the old gentleman who was robbed, was there also, and shook hands with him.

When the case was called the old man, after the policeman told the story of the arrest, gave his version of the robbery and the part the boy from the country and his dog had played in the capture of the thief.

"Well, now, young man," said the judge, turning to Hal, "let us hear what you know about it. You must swear to tell the truth and nothing else but the truth."

"Hold up your right hand," said the clerk of the court.

"Hold up your hand, too, Tige," said Hal, as he held up his hand.

Tige stood up on his hind feet and held his right paw above his head at the same time.

There was a tremendous explosion of laughter—everybody laughed. The judge looked over his glasses at the dog and exclaimed:

"Bless my soul!"

Tige looked as solemn as an owl through it all, the uproarious laughter having no effect on him. He simply stood there waiting till Hal should lower his hand.

"Don't swear the dog," said the judge. "I guess he doesn't understand the nature of an oath."

Hal swore to tell the truth, and then took down his hand. Tige lowered his paw and got down on his four feet, wagged his tail, and seemed to think he had done the right thing. Then the boy from the country told his story of the robbery in the bank, and how he made Tige catch the thief. It was interesting, and everybody in the court-room listened in silence to the end.

The judge remanded the prisoner to the Tombs to await the action of the Grand Jury, and then told Hal he would have to be detained as a witness unless he could give bail in the sum of five hundred dollars to insure his attendance at court as a witness.

Hal was staggered. But he was clear grit all the way through.

"How am I to be detained, judge?" he asked.

"In the House of Detention—as a witness," said the judge, "unless you can give security or bond in the sum of five hundred dollars for your appearance as a witness against the prisoner."

"That means I am to be locked up as a prisoner till the trial comes off, does it?"

"Yes."

"And I have done no wrong—broken no law," and he looked the astonishment he felt.

"It is the law," said the judge, in a tone that indicated his full sympathy for the boy.

"Well, if I am to be locked up when I have done no wrong—really for catching a thief who had robbed a man, I'll swear to leave such a country as soon as I can get out of it."

"It is done in the interest of justice," explained the judge.

"But how about the injustice to me? I've done no wrong."

"But it's to punish the thief, which can't be done without your evidence."

"Judge, if I am locked up and kept a prisoner when I have done no wrong, I shall not give any evidence against the prisoner."

"Do you defy the law? Officer, take witness away."

A policeman started toward him.

"Tige! If any man touches me chaw him up!"

Instantly every hair on Tige bristled up, and his white fangs gleamed, eyes flashed and growls issued from his terrible mouth. The officer stepped back in a state of terror, and everybody near the dog got out of the way. The judge sprang to his feet and leaned over to look at the dog.

"Do you mean to resist the law?" he asked Hal.

"To the death—hang such a law! Down with any country that makes such laws!" and Hal's eyes flashed, his face flushed, and his entire frame trembled with indignation. "I am a poor boy from the country in search of work by which to help support a widowed mother. You can't lock me up—you may kill me and my dog, but——"

"Your honor," called out Mr. Wolff, the man who had been robbed, "I'll go on the boy's bond. He is right about it. It is an outrage to deprive a man of his liberty without cause. I never thought of such a thing until this case came up."

"Very well," said the judge. "Let the bond be given. I am here to enforce the laws, though I cannot approve some of them."

While the bail bond was being arranged the judge turned to Hal and remarked:

"Young man, we live in the best country on earth, and have the most free and enlightened government in the world; but we are far from being perfect. In the course of time this law that enforces the detention of witnesses may give way to some other that is less onerous. Let me advise you never to attempt to resist the law of the land as you attempted to do a few moments ago. You can always find in the courts redress for any wrong you may suffer. Resistance of the law is a crime. It places men behind prison bars. Don't ever attempt it again. I tell you this for your guidance in the future, with the hope that you may succeed in finding work. If you fail to do so come back here and report to me."

"Thank you, judge. I didn't know the law. I only knew I had done nothing to be locked up for," said Hal as he stood aside waiting for the bail bond to be arranged and signed. It was soon settled, and then he was told he could go.

"Come with me, young man," said Mr. Wolff. "I may be able to find a place for you," and Hal followed him out of the court-room, passing through a packed crowd which had been drawn hither by the dog's actions.

Out on the street a crowd surrounded them—the crowd that instantly surrounds an accident or novelty in the streets of the great city. The old gentleman was annoyed. He had no use for the rabble, so he said:

"Come on," and started for a street car. The crowd followed. When they hailed a car the conductor refused to permit the dog to ride.

"I'll pay for him," said the old man.

"It's against the rules, sir," said the conductor.

"Here, my lad," said Wolff, handing Hal his card and a five-dollar bill. "Take your time and come to my place of business. I can't lose any more time."

"Thank you, sir—I'll call there," and Hal left the car with Tige.

There was the crowd again, and he was once more surrounded by a mob of over a hundred people who had nothing else to do at the time. Of course the police had to disperse it, and Hal had to move on down the street.

CHAPTER VI.

DOWN ON THE DOCKS.

On looking at the card Mr. Wolff had given him Hal saw that he was a real estate dealer, with an office over a dozen blocks farther down in the city. Of course, he didn't know how far off the office was, for he was never in the city before. But he put the card in his pocket alongside the five-dollar bill he had received with it, and went on his way down the street, quite a number of small boys following him and Tige. He saw a policeman on the corner on the opposite side of the street, and went over to him to ask how he could find Mr. Wolff's place.

The boys thought he had gone to him for protection from themselves, and at once dispersed.

The officer told him how to find the place, and, when he had done so, moved away, swinging his club in the lazy way so easily acquired by the bluecoats.

Hal went on as directed, and half an hour later reached the office. Mr. Wolff was there in his private office, and at once had him shown in by one of his young assistants.

"Now, see here, my boy," said the old man, "you rendered me a service yesterday for which I rendered you one this morning. You must understand, though, that if you do not appear at the trial of that fellow as a witness, I will have to pay five hundred dollars into court."

"Yes, sir, I'll be there if I am alive and know when the time comes."

"I believe you, but you must let me know where you stop, so I can notify you when the trial is to come off."

"I don't know where I am to stop, sir."

"Well, if you don't find work anywhere come back here and let me know. I have none that you can attend to, though I may be able to do something toward finding something for you. You have no trade, have you?"

"No, sir—I am just a plain, green country boy."

"With plenty of grit, though," said the old man. "That's what pulls a man through in the long run. Just knock around and see what you can find to do, and the experience will be worth something to you."

Hal went out and looked up and down the street, wondering which way he should go. He did not think the old man had failed in his duty to him, for saving his thousand dollars for him. The five dollars was like a little fortune to him, though the rich real estate dealer should have made it fifty dollars instead.

Down in the next block he saw a sign hanging in the window of a store which bore the legend:

"Boy wanted,"

"I'm a boy," he said to himself, "and I'll find out if I am the one he wants."

He went in with Tige at his heels, and asked a clerk for the man who wanted a boy.

"Guess you're too large," said the clerk, shaking his head.

"I'll shrink up a bit if I can get something to do," he replied, "but I can't help growing, you know."

The clerk smiled and sent him back to the office in the rear of the store to the superintendent. He saw a man engaged in talking with him, and waited till he was gone.

"You want a boy, sir?" he said.

"Yes," and the superintendent looked him over from head to foot. "What can you do?"

"I can do many things, sir. What do you want a boy to do?"

"Run errands, mostly."

"Well, I am a good runner."

"Where did you work last, and why did you leave there?"

"I worked at home in the country, sir, and came to the city to——"

"Just from the country, eh? Well, you won't do. You don't know the city well enough to be of good service," and he waved him away with his hand.

"Give me a chance to learn, sir."

"Get out!" was the quick reply.

"Good-day, sir. Come, Tige," and he went out, passing the clerk on the way, who asked:

"Couldn't you shrink up enough?"

"No. He wants a boy as small as himself."

The clerk chuckled, and Hal emerged into the street.

In less than half an hour he had met with two more rebuffs that made him sick at heart.

"I'll go across town and see what luck I can find over there," he said to himself, and started off toward the river. Down on the river front he was so interested in looking at the shipping he almost forgot his troubles.

Suddenly a man and boy came by with a little one-horse wagon, gathering scraps of iron. The man was half drunk and abusing the boy like a pirate about something.

"I didn't do it," said the boy.

"Shut up—yer did!" and he gave him a punch with his fist that sent the boy rolling on the pavement.

"You're a brave man," said Hal, his eyes flashing.

"Oh, you want one, too, eh?" and the brutal fellow advanced menacingly upon him.

Tige sprang between them with a fierce, warning growl. The brute stepped back in alarm.

"Oh, he's only a dog—a brute like yourself," said Hal. "Don't mind him."

The man took an iron bar from the wagon and started after Tige.

"Better let the dog alone," said Hal, "or you'll get hurt."

He struck at Tige. The dog dodged and then went for him. He tore the entire leg off his trousers, and bit him in two places.

With a yell of terror the brute sprang up in his wagon and began hurling bits of iron at both the boys and the dog. The horse became frightened at the racket and dashed off up the street at full speed. Hal laughed and turned to the boy, a youth of about seventeen, and asked if he was hurt.

"Yes, I am hurt," he said, "but I hope your dog chawed him some."

"You can bet he did. He has a leg of his trousers now."

"Glad of it. I won't work for him any longer—if I starve," and then he looked Hal over for a moment or two, saying:

"You'll be arrested if he comes back. Let's go away from here."

"All right," and they moved off down the street.

"Old Hodge is the meanest man on earth, and cheats everybody who deals with him," said the youth, as they went along. "Some day I'll get even with him in a way he won't like."

"Is that the name of the man you worked with?" Hal asked.

"Yes. He only paid me one dollar and fifty cents a week and boarded me. The pay would not keep one in clothes and shoes, so I haven't any money ahead. But I'll just starve before I work for him again. I've been with him long enough to learn the business, and if I had a few dollars I'd go into it on my own hook."

"Will it pay?" Hal asked.

"You bet it pays. I've known him to make twenty dollars in one day. Nobody cares for old iron, and he gets it for almost nothing, and sells it for a cent a pound."

"How much money is needed?"

"Oh, five dollars would be enough, but I'd have to hire a push cart."

"How much for that?"

"Fifty cents a week. I could soon make enough to buy one."

Hal was thinking and thinking hard. He had over eight dollars in his pocket, and was wondering if it would pay to invest five of it in the business, when the youth grabbed him by the arm and pulled him into a little store, saying:

"Come in here, quick, or there'll be a thundering row!"

CHAPTER VII.

HOW HAL STARTED IN BUSINESS.

Hal was very much puzzled as he noticed his companion watching a stalwart Irish woman pass the door.

"What's the matter?" he asked him.

"Wait till we get out and I'll tell you," was the reply.

The woman in charge of the store went to them and asked if they wanted anything.

"No, ma'am," said the quick-witted youth. "We dodged in here to keep our dog from meeting another dog in front of your store. There would have been an awful fight, and a big crowd would have gathered."

Tige was there, and the woman believed the story. Hal smiled and saw that the boy was quick at devising ways to supply resources for an emergency. In another moment the youth opened the door and passed out, Hal and Tige following him.

"That was a whopper you gave the lady," said Hal. "What's it all about, anyway?"

"Well, I had to put up some sort of excuse for going in there as we did when we didn't want to buy anything. Come on round the corner now and I'll tell you about it," and he led the way round the corner and up the street away from the river front.

"Last week Mr. Hodge cheated Mrs. O'Halloran in a trade for a lot of old iron lying in a corner of her back yard," explained the youth, "and when she found it out she declared war on him. We happened to pass her block two days later, and she went for us. We saved ourselves by flight. I was afraid she'd go for me when I saw her coming. She's a terror and no mistake."

"Well, you were not to blame," said Hal.

"Not in the least, but she thinks I am. Hodge made the bargain with her, and I helped him load the stuff on the wagon."

"Well, I don't blame you for dodging her," laughed Hal. "She looked like a woman who could lick a grown man."

"She can—I've heard she licked two men at a wake once, but don't know how true it is. I don't care to let her get her hands on me. Is that your dog?"

"Yes," and then the two talked for some time. Hal told him how he happened to come to the city in search of work.

"You'll have a time of it finding anything to do. If we could raise five dollars we could go into the scrap-iron business and make money."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Dead sure. I could sell a million pounds of old iron if I had it, and get the cost for it every time."

"But can you get the scraps?"

"Yes, by prowling all over the city after it."

"And you've got to hire a push cart to move it?"

"Yes."

"How much can we make a week at it?"

"That depends on how much we buy and sell. We ought to make ten a week easily—sometimes more—depends on how much iron is to be had. Got any money?"

"I can put in five dollars," said Hal, "if I know it's all right."

"It's all right every time. You can handle your own money. I don't want to touch it."

"What's your name?"

"Fred Smith."

"Where do you live, Fred?"

"I have no home except with old Hodge. My parents are dead. I have an aunt down on the east side who has a house full of children and but little to feed 'em with."

Hal then told him who he was, and said he'd give the scrap iron business a trial.

"Then come with me and we'll get a push cart right away. I know where there's nearly a thousand pounds of old iron for sale which old Hodge is trying to get for a dollar. The old woman who owns it wants three dollars for it. She'll take two dollars and a half."

"But why pay two dollars and a half for it if Hodge won't give but one dollar for it?"

"Hodge will give three dollars for it if he can't get it for any less, but won't let her know it. He's a sharp old villain."

They went over on the west side to an old dealer in iron scraps, who had push carts to hire. Fred knew him, and said to him:

"Mr. Polinsky, we are going into business for ourselves, and want to hire a cart."

"You vas got der monish?" the old dealer asked.

"Yes."

"Vell, you prings me dot irons?"

"Yes. You can have first chance, but it's no sale if you don't pay enough for it."

"Dot vas all righd," and the old Polish Jew led the way to his yard in the rear of his place, and showed a dozen push-carts of various sizes and shapes. Fred picked out one, and Hal paid fifty cents for the use of it one week. Hal left his bundle with Polinsky.

"Now, come on, Hal," said Fred. "We'll have a load of iron inside of an hour."

They went up on the west side for nearly a mile, and stopped in front of a very dingy looking house. Fred went into a little dirty candy store, and asked for Mrs. Morgenthal. A big German woman appeared and said:

"Ach! you vas coom pack?"

"Yes. I want to buy your old scraps in the back yard," said Fred.

"Vell, vot you gifs for dem?"

"Mr. Hodge offered you one dollar for the pile. I'll give you two dollars."

"Nein—I vas ged tree tollar or nodings," she replied.

"Oh, you want to get rich and marry again," Fred laughed. "I'll make it two dollars and twenty-five cents. What do you say?"

"Nein—nein—I don'd gif 'em away like dot."

"Well, you'll have to keep it, then," and Fred turned to leave the little store. She called him back and said:

"Auf you gifs von quarter more as dot I vill dake id."

"All right. Let's look at the pile again," and he went through the back room out into the back yard, followed by Hal. The pile of old iron had not been disturbed since Hodge looked at it.

"It's all there—pay her for it, Hal."

Hal paid her the money, and Fred began carrying it out and placing it in the push cart in front of the store. Hal assisted him, and soon had three hundred pounds on the little vehicle.

"That's as much as it can safely carry," said Fred, and they started away with it. An hour later old Polinsky paid them three dollars and ten cents for the load.

"Got your money back and two full loads yet to come," said Fred. "What do you think of it?"

"Wait till we get it all in," replied Hal. "I used to count

chickens before they were hatched, and always found some eggs that didn't pan out anything."

Fred laughed and said:

"Well, come on and let's get in the other loads as fast as we can," and he seized hold of the cart and started off up the street again. Hal kept along with him, and took turns at pushing the cart.

The second load was a little heavier than the first one, and brought three dollars and thirty cents, when delivered to old Polinsky. The third brought three dollars and five cents—and that cleaned up the pile they had bought from Mrs. Morrenthal.

By that time it was near night, and both boys were tired. Hal was very hungry, as neither he nor Tige had tasted any food since morning. But before they turned the cart in to be taken care of during the night by old Polinsky they counted up the profits.

"Six dollars and forty-five cents," said Hal, "for half a day's work."

"That is better than we can do every day," said Fred. "When it rains all day we can't do anything. Then when we have to tramp several hours before we can pick up a load we can't do as well. Sometimes we find a pile and make even more. I once knew Hodge to make over twenty dollars in one day."

"Well, I'll go into it for keeps," said Hal. "I'll take out the three dollars I put in, and we have six dollars and forty-five cents to go on now. But I'm hungry enough to eat a chunk of scrap iron, and I guess Tige is, too."

"Come on, then. I know where we can get a good supper for ten cents, but we won't get any shad and such things as that."

"Anything will do that will fill me up," said Hal, going with him.

They went to a little eating-house where they got enough to satisfy their hunger, and Hal spent a nickel more for Tige's supper. When they came out Fred said it was summer, so they didn't need a bed.

"Going to sit up all night?" Hal asked.

"No—but I know where we can get free lodgings with an extra bed for the dog," and he went back to Polinsky's place, climbed over the fence in the rear, and found shelter among the push carts under a shed.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW HAL SET OUT TO LEARN A BUSINESS.

When morning came they were out of the place before sunrise, went to a drinking trough for horses, bathed their hands and faces, and went back to the little eating-house for breakfast.

"We saved twenty cents each for lodgings," said Fred, as they neared the eating house.

"Yes," returned Hal, "but I can't say I like the bed much."

"Nor I," assented Fred, "but it's all right till we can do better."

"Yes, but if the police find us there they'll arrest us, won't they?"

"Yes; but they don't bother around there any. I've slept there before. The only trouble is with tramps. They get in there sometimes—a half dozen of 'em. They are a hard crowd."

"They won't come over that fence while Tige is there," remarked Hal.

"Oh, I forgot about that," and Fred seemed pleased at the information. "He will prevent us from being robbed."

"You can bet on that. But if we have good luck we must hire a room and bed where we can have a home and live like decent people."

"Yes—yes—I'd like to,"

As soon as Polinsky opened his place the two boys got their cart out, and went off in search of old iron.

"Now, Hal, you push the cart while I do the hunting," said Fred, as they started out.

"All right. It will give me a chance to see how you do it," and he watched his partner going into all sorts of places inquiring for old iron of any kind. They tramped over an hour before finding a single pound of iron. Then they began picking up little lots here and there, till the push cart was half filled.

Suddenly a little girl ran up to Fred and said her mamma had a lot of old iron to sell.

"Where is it?" Fred asked.

"In the back yard over there," and the child pointed to an old squatter shanty on the corner of a vacant square, over on the left. Fred went with her and Hal followed with the cart. There the girl's mother told him there was a big pile of old iron in the corner of the little yard in the rear of the shanty. He went to look at it, and found it under a pile of rubbish, mostly old cinders and ashes.

"It's been here a long time," he said to the woman.

"Yes—and was here when we moved in a year ago."

"It isn't yours, then?"

"I dunno why it ain't. It's old rubbish thrown over to fill in the place."

"Well, I'll buy it if you'll rake off the rubbish so I can see it. I'll come by to-morrow morning."

She promised to have the rubbish cleared away, and he went out to tell Hal they would come back the next day. They moved on, and soon found a lot of scrap iron lying on the sidewalk in front of a carpenter's shop. A junkman was bargaining for it, and Hal and Fred stopped and looked on. The junkman turned and said in a brusque way:

"Go on now—what yer stoppin' here for?"

"Do you own this street?" Fred asked him.

"Go on."

"I'll go on when I wish to," said Fred.

The junkman ran at him, and Fred backed clear out into the street to where Hal stood with the cart. The man followed him up, and said to Hal:

"You move on, now—in a hurry."

"See here," said Hal, "you move yourself or I'll make you!"

The man grabbed him by the collar. The next moment Tige was on him. He howled and tried to fight, but the dog put him to flight in thirty seconds.

"Here, Tige!" called Hal, and the faithful dog obeyed, to the very great surprise of the carpenter.

"I never touched him," laughed Hal, as he patted Tige on the head.

"No—he was served right," the carpenter replied. "He had no right to order you to move on. He was trying to buy this pile of old iron for fifty cents. I know it is worth four times as much."

"So it is," said Fred, "but when a fellow has to load and unload it after buying it he won't make much on it."

"What'll you give for it?"

"One dollar," said Fred.

"Make it a dollar and a half and take it."

"All right," and the money was paid. They began loading it at once—nearly five hundred pounds. But as they had the cart half filled at the time, they could not take even half the new purchase.

"Will you let it lie here till we come back for it?" Fred asked the carpenter.

"Yes, if you will take it away before night."

"We'll do that," and the two boys started to leave, when another junkman drove up.

It was a startling surprise to Fred when he looked up and saw Hodge, his former employer.

"What are you doing here?" Hodge asked him.

"Buying old iron," was the reply, for he no longer feared him.

"What you buying with?"

"Cash."

"Whar'd you git it?"

"Out of the bank, of course."

"Oh, you've got lots of it there, I s'pose?"

"Yes—enough to pay for all the iron in the town. Get down and let the dog play with you again."

"Oh, that's the dog, is it? Well, I am looking for that very dog," and he drew from his pocket an old revolver. "Out o' the way, or you'll get hurt!"

"Here, Tige!" called Hal, and the dog promptly went to him. Hal put a foot on either side of him, saying:

"If you shoot my dog you shoot me. If you fail to kill him I'll make him kill you."

"Mr. Hodge!" called out Fred, "you go on now and let us alone. You owe me for four days' work, but I don't want anything more to do with you."

"Well, see here, my fine bantam. Have you a license to do business?" Hodge replied.

"Never mind about my business. You attend to yours and let mine alone. The world is big enough for us both."

"See here, now," put in the carpenter, "I've just sold that pile of iron to these two boys, and got the money for it. You have no right to interfere with them. If you do I'll take a hand in it myself."

"Oh, that's all right. I'll break up their little business," and with that he put up his weapon and drove off.

Fred was in a rage.

"Hold on, there," he called out to him, and Hodge stopped half a block away. Fred ran down to the wagon and said to him:

"I have no license, Mr. Hodge, and if anybody comes to me to see about it I'll put him onto your lead pipe deals. Do you tumble?"

The junkman nearly fell off his wagon in astonishment.

The law made it a crime for junkmen to buy lead pipe from other than dealers except under certain conditions, and Hodge had been violating the law right straight along by buying lead pipe from thieves.

"I ain't putting no license men onto you," stammered Hodge.

"All right, then. You go your way and I'll go mine," said Fred, turning away and rejoining Hal.

CHAPTER IX.

HAL AND HIS PARTNER MAKE A DEAL AND HAVE TROUBLE.

"What did you say to him, Fred?" Hal asked when his partner returned to him.

"I told him something that will make him let us alone," said Fred.

"You can have him arrested for carrying a pistol," suggested the carpenter.

"Yes, I know I can, and I'll do it if he bothers us again. We'll be back after the other load just as soon as we can, sir," and the two boys hurried off down the street with their load as fast as they could.

When they reached Polinsky's place they found Hodge there in a very bad humor, but they said nothing to him. He spoke to Fred, though, and said:

"You went and got Mrs. Morgenthal's iron when you knew it was mine."

"What! Did you buy it?" Fred asked.

"I found it and had made her an offer for it."

"And she refused to take it, so it was not yours. I made her an offer for it, and she took it. Wasn't that all right?"

"Oh, you went and——"

"Yes, I went and bought it. That's all there is to it. What is the matter with you?"

Just then another junkman came in, a stalwart fellow of about thirty years of age of the name of Kammerford. He knew both Hodge and Fred, and had no love for either. The jealousy among junkmen is like that existing between missionaries and physicians. When he saw Polinsky settling with Hal for the load he had brought in he looked at him keenly and asked:

"Where did you come from?"

"I was born just like other people, I suppose," replied Hal.

"Oh, indeed! Have you got a license to do business?"

"Show me your right to ask and I'll answer you," replied Hal.

"I have a license, and have a right to know if you have, being in the same line of business."

"You may have a license, but you have no right to bother me," returned Hal.

"Well, I'll show you whether I have or not. Show your license or I'll take you to the station house—that's what I'll do!"

"I guess not!" laughed Hal.

"I guess yes!"

"I can put up five dollars with Mr. Polinsky here that you can't do it."

Quick as a flash Kammerford put a five-dollar bill into Polinsky's hand, saying:

"Hold the stakes, old man."

The next moment he grabbed Hal by the collar, and almost at the same instant Tige entered his protest—in the calf of the junkman's leg.

In less than sixty seconds Kammerford was down on the ground, and Hal and Tige made him cry enough.

"I'll kill the dog, though!" he exclaimed, seizing a bar of iron.

"I guess not," said Hal, seizing a bar of iron, too. "My dog and me stand by each other against the world. You've got to take me to the station house or lose your money."

"I didn't agree to take the dog."

"You needn't take the dog if you don't want to—just take me."

"I will when I kill the dog."

"Pitch in and kill him as fast as you please."

But the junkman dared not attempt it, and Hal claimed the stakes.

"Don't give 'em up," said Kammerford. "I ain't done with 'im yet."

"Then begin again," said Hal. "You can't keep me here from my business all day."

"I'll take my time."

"But you can't take mine. I'll give you five minutes, and if you don't do it I'll claim the stakes."

They waited five minutes, and then Hal turned to old Polinsky.

"Give me that money. I've won it fairly."

"No—no—nod yet alretty!"

"Now see here, old man. I'm a greenhorn from the country, but I know white from black. Give me that money or I'll set the dog on you. I am no rusty piece of scrap iron."

Polinsky was rattled. He feared the dog as he feared a Bengal tiger.

"Give it up now, quick! You can't play any games on me," and Hal held out his hand—and got the money.

Kammerford raved and swore he'd punch the old man's head.

"If you do I'll report you to the police," said Hal, as he and Fred started to leave for the remaining load of iron they had bought. Polinsky went into his office and locked the door to keep Kammerford from getting at him.

"Fred, what does a license cost?" Hal asked of his partner.

"Ten dollars for a push cart."

"Then we must get one. We don't want to be arrested. We've got one more load, and when we have delivered that we must get the license."

"But we ought to make the money first," said Fred.

"We have enough to pay for it," said Hal, "and it must be done."

They delivered the other load, and received the money for it. Then Polinsky told Hal he must return the five dollars to Kammerford, or there would be trouble.

"I won't return it," said Hal. "I won it fair, and will face all the trouble that comes."

Polinsky wrung his hands and said many things in Yiddish, but Hal did not return the money. On the contrary, they both repaired to the City Hall, and secured a license, which, to their great joy, proved to be but five dollars for a push cart. It was ten dollars for a horse and wagon.

"Oh, but it's a good joke!" laughed Hal, as they came away.

"Where is the joke?" Fred asked.

"Why, don't you see it? That bully Kammerford paid for it."

"Oh, so he did," and then Fred joined in the laugh.

Then they went back to Polinsky's place and told him they had a license, showing him the document.

"Dot vas all righd," said the old man, and they went off in the highest spirits to look at the heap of old scrap iron which lay buried under the great pile of rubbish way up among the squatter settlement on the west side. It took them a long time to get there, but when they did they found that the rubbish had been raked away from about two tons of old iron, one-fourth of which was too badly rusted to pay for moving it. Fred examined a good deal of it, and threw up quite a pile of rusted scraps to show what it was.

"What'll you take for it?" he asked the woman.

"What'll you give?" she asked.

"Not much," and he shook his head. "It's badly rusted, you see."

"Yes, but make me an offer."

"Well, I'll give you five dollars."

She was silent for a minute or two, and then said she'd take it. They paid her the money, and then began to load up the cart. Only the best pieces were taken, and when they delivered it found that it passed all right.

"I want another cart," said Hal to the old Pole.

"Two carts?"

"Yes," and he paid fifty cents for the use of another cart for one week, much to the delight of the old man, who seemed to like them, notwithstanding Hal's threat to put Tige on him about the stake money.

"We can now deliver the iron in a hurry," said Hal, as they both started off in a hurry.

"Yes, and the sooner we do so the more money we'll make," replied Fred.

"Of course," and they lost no time in wending their way up to the place where the big pile of old iron lay. In gathering it up Fred discovered a lot of copper sheeting, bolts and shapeless lumps of the metal. He whistled his amazement, but said nothing to anyone. Every piece was so covered with dirt and iron rust that Hal could not distinguish it from iron.

On the way back Fred told Hal that there was probably fifty dollars' worth of copper in the pile.

"Whew!" and Hal whistled.

"Don't say a word about it," cautioned Fred.

"Why not?"

"Because we don't want to let anybody know our business."

"Yes, that's so," assented Hal.

When they delivered the two loads of copper old Polinsky was almost paralyzed—the bill was forty dollars.

CHAPTER X.

THE TROUBLES THAT CAME TO THE BOYS WERE MANY.

"Where you gedt dose copper—hey?" old Polinsky asked Fred.

"I bought it in an old pile of rusty scraps," Fred replied, "and I've got more of it."

"Vell, I don't bay so mooch vor some more," and he shrugged his shoulders.

"Yes, you will—if you get it," replied Fred.

"It was mage me some droubles."

"No danger of that. It isn't stolen stuff. You can see it's been out in the pile a long time."

Still he muttered Yiddish, and pursed up his mouth.

"Oh, that's all right, old man. If you don't want it, we won't bring it to you. Rosenberg will take it."

"I dakes all dot ish righd," said the old man.

Rosenberg was a rival dealer whom Polinsky hated with the malice of commerce.

"It is all right," persisted Fred, "and we don't want any kicking. You pay the market price, or it goes to Rosenberg."

"Vell—you pring id an' I dells you vat I giffs."

"All right—you'll give the market price or it's no sale. Rosenberg has carts to hire, too."

Fred knew the old fellow was trying to get the rest of the copper for less money, and was determined he should not do so.

On the way back he told Hal what the game was.

"They are all old skinflints," he said, "and try all sorts of dodges to get the stuff for almost nothing. He wants me to believe he thinks that copper was stolen somewhere."

"Well, what do you think about it?" Hal asked him.

"I think it's all right. If it was new it might be different. Any old lead pipe in that condition would be all right, too. But new lead pipe you want to let alone unless you buy it from a builder or manufacturer. The law is very strict about it, on account of thieves going into new buildings going up, or vacant houses, and taking it away."

"Well, I'm glad you are posted on the business," remarked Hal.

"Oh, you've got to be posted, or you'll get pulled quicker'n lightning."

When they got back to the heap they had bought, they found the woman there in a rage. Another junkman had come along and seen it. He told her she had been cheated, and that she wanted more money for it.

"You have not been cheated, ma'am," said Fred.

"Yes, I have. Another man offered me more for the pile as it now is than you gave for all of it."

"He wouldn't give it. He said that to worry you. Where is he?"

"He has just gone up the street, and says he'll be back in an hour or two."

"Well, I paid you your price. The stuff is mine. I am making a little on it, and you see how hard we have to work to do that."

"You can't take any more away till you pay me more for it."

"Didn't you sell it?"

"Yes, but I was cheated."

"Who cheated you?"

"Why, you did."

"Oh, look here now. I made you an offer, and you accepted it, took the money, and we have moved some of it. The pile is mine, and we are going to move the balance of it."

"Not if I know it you won't," and she seized a big stick and undertook to drive them off the premises.

"Look out for the dog, now!" said Fred, getting out of her way.

She made an attack on Tige, and he went for her.

She yelled and fled, seeking refuge in the shanty, where she shut the door and stood at a little window, whence she assailed them with a shower of abuse.

Fred and Hal loaded their carts as fast as they could, taking all the copper that was there, and pushed out into the street again. What they had taken did not seem to diminish the heap to any perceptible extent. But Fred knew that the great bulk was rusted stuff that had no value at all.

"Now, see here, ma'am," he said, to the irate woman, "I don't want any trouble with you. That is our pile of stuff in the yard there. We've paid for it, and if any of it is removed before we return I'll have you arrested and taken to court. Do you understand?"

"Here comes my husband," she said, and he came up, having been sent for by her. She told him she had been cheated, that another junkman had come along and offered more for the pile as it was than the boys had paid for it.

"Then, begob, they don't get any more of it," said the brawny workman.

"Didn't we pay for it?" Fred asked.

"Niver moind that, me laddybuck," said the man. "Yez don't git no more av it."

"Then you'll sleep in the station house to-night," said Fred. "Come on, Hal. I know how to deal with men like him."

"Hold on a moment," said Hal. "How much more than we gave you did the other man offer you?"

"Five dollars more," replied the woman.

"Well, just give us back our money, and we'll call it square. I won't stand in the way of a poor woman making five dollars, or five cents, when she has the chance."

"That's the talk," said her husband. "Give the byes the money an' have no throuble at all, at all."

She went into the shanty and got the money, came out with it, and gave it to Hal, saying he was a "rale gintlemin."

Then they went away with their two carts filled with copper, for which old Polinsky planked down another forty dollars.

A couple of hours after the boys left the shanty the junkman who had been the cause of the trouble drove up. The man and woman told him they would take his offer. He went in and looked at the pile again, saw that the copper was gone, and very naturally declined to take it.

The woman set up a howl.

She had given away several cartloads of the stuff, and hadn't a dollar to show for it. It crept into the thick head of her husband that the junkman and the two boys had conspired to trick his wife out of the old iron without paying for it, and he went for him like a red-hot son of Erin at a Donnybrook Fair.

The junkman fought hard, but the man and his wife were too many for him. They jumped and danced on him, and walked all over him, till the police went to his rescue and took them all to the station house, charged with disorderly conduct.

It cost the man and wife twenty dollars to keep from going to the island. The junkman was turned loose with more bruises than he had ever borne on his person at one time in all his life before.

Of course, Fred and Hal knew nothing about that until several days after. But they did know that they had gotten about one hundred dollars' worth of stuff in the shape of old iron and copper without paying a cent for it.

"I think we ought to pay them something, Fred," Hal said

to his partner that evening up in the little room they had hired for a lodging.

"Oh, they ought to lose every penny of it for the game they tried to play on us," returned Fred. "They took us for a couple of boys whom they could scare five dollars more out of. We bought the heap at a guess, and struck it rich."

"That's why we can afford to be generous with them."

"Generous be blowed. They don't know what generosity means, and wouldn't thank you for a ten-dollar gold piece unless they thought it might bring 'em another dollar for so doing. Besides, that pile of old iron was there when they moved in. It was not theirs, so what we paid 'em was clear gain."

"Yes, I know that," assented Hal, "but somehow I don't like the idea of our making so much out of it and not making any return for it. I am going to give 'em ten dollars out of my share."

"Well, let's make it five each, and give it to 'em, but they don't deserve it."

CHAPTER XI.

"FREE LODGINGS AND PAY."

Hal discovered that his young partner had been bumping up against a hard corner in the great city ever since he had to struggle for himself, and had pretty near all the sentiment knocked out of him. But he knew he was well up to all the games that were played in the business, and was a good judge of what would sell, and what would not, and as they had done so well thus far he made up his mind to stick to him and the scrap iron.

Several days passed, and they did not strike any more bonanzas. They had to go a good many miles a day to get a cartful of iron. But their expenses were light, so they didn't worry.

Finally they passed a place where some carpenters were at work on a building, and one of them called out to them:

"Hello, boys!"

They looked in and saw the carpenter from whom they had bought several loads of scrap iron in front of his shop, way over on the other side of town.

"Hello!" returned Hal, recognizing him instantly. "Got any scraps in there?"

"No; but I know where you can find some," and they went into the building to talk with him. They were scarcely well inside when Hal saw Mr. Wolff, the real estate man who had given bail for him to keep him out of the House of Detention.

"Ah!" exclaimed the old gentleman, "where have you been keeping yourself, young man?"

"I've been getting into business, sir," Hal answered.

"Got a place, eh?"

"Yes, sir—and am my own employer. This is my partner, Fred Smith," and he caught hold of Fred's arm as he spoke. Fred had heard about the old gentleman, so he took off his hat to him.

"Partner—in business for yourself? What is the line?"

"Scrap iron, sir."

"Scrap iron—turned junkman?"

"Well, I suppose that's what they call us," said Hal.

"Well, you promised to let me know where you were when you got a place, and this is the first I've seen of you."

"I wasn't sure I was settled. I've been trying the business to see how it would pay."

"Well, how does it pan out?"

"Much better than nothing, sir. I guess I can make a living at it till something better offers. I intended to go to your office on Tuesday last, but we found a good deal of iron that day, and so could not do so."

"Do you pay anything for iron?"

"Yes, sir," and he told him about it in a frank sort of way, saying the five dollars he had given him was the capital upon which he and Fred had started.

"Started in business on five dollars, eh? Well, great fortunes have been made on even smaller beginnings. I've been wanting to see you for two days. Where are you staying of nights?"

Hal told him.

"Well, I want you and your dog to work for me of nights. I have several buildings going up in different parts of the city. This is one of them. Each building, unless they are side by side, has to have a watchman to keep tramps and thieves out of them at night, and each watchman costs me ten dollars a week. Now, if you will take one of the buildings to watch, your dog can watch it while you sleep."

"Yes, sir," said Hal, eager to hear more, "and he is a good guard, too."

"Of course he is. I'll have a tool-house of plank put in with a cot where you can sleep. Your dog can do the watching, for which I'll pay you six dollars a week."

"I'll do it, sir—if you put in two cots—one for my partner."

"Well, I'll do that, as two are better than one."

"Fred, it's six dollars a week and free lodgings," Hal said to his partner.

"Yes, I'll go in with you," said Fred, and the bargain was made then and there.

They were to return there that evening just before the men left off work, and report to the foreman, who would have a plank shed put up inside for them. They were to use no lamps with oil, but simply candles, on account of the danger of fire.

That settled, Fred turned to ask the carpenter about the scrap iron he had hinted about, but found he had gone up into another story to work.

"Well, we can see him this evening when we return to sleep here," Fred said to Hal.

"Yes, that will do," and the two boys went out and moved up the street with their carts.

"That is what I call luck, Hal," Fred remarked. "Free lodgings and six dollars a week for sleeping there."

"Yes, so it is," assented Hal. "But really Tige earns the money, for he is to do the guarding. We could not work in the daytime unless we get sleep at night."

"That's so. We must see that he gets a good square meal every time we do."

"Yes, he ought to have it."

They had just an average amount of luck in gathering old iron that day, making about one dollar each. When they delivered their loads they left the carts with old Polinsky and went to the little restaurant for their supper, after which they hurried off to catch the carpenter before he left off work.

He was just leaving when they met him. Said he, on seeing them:

"Ah! I was afraid you would not show up in time."

"We are on time," said Hal, "and expect to be every time. Where is that iron you spoke about this morning?"

"Within two blocks of where I live. You know where that is?"

"Yes."

"Well, it's at No. 470 on the same street, and belongs to an old woman. Hodge offered her three dollars for what she has, but I told her I knew two boys who would give her more. She was my wife's washerwoman when she was sick, so I thought I'd take the trouble to help her get more for her stuff."

"That's right," said Hal.

"But you had an awful row with the couple in the shanty over on the next avenue. What was it all about?"

Fred told him, and he said:

"Well, the junkman wouldn't take it after you took the best part of it away, and they nearly beat him to death. They were arrested, and the husband had to pay about twenty dollars to keep off the island."

"The deuce!" exclaimed Hal. "That's hard luck. Do you know the man?"

"Yes. He is a mortar man on a house that is building two blocks above here. You can find him at work there to-morrow morning."

"Then we'll see him. I want to help him out a little, even if he did try to play us a mean game," and Hal seemed more than ever determined to return the money to the man's wife, which she had paid back in the hope of making more.

The foreman then showed them the quarters he had provided for them and went away, leaving them in charge.

CHAPTER XII.

HOW FRED AND HAL WERE DISPOSSESSED.

Fred bought a candle and matches to be used when needed, and the two went in and took possession of the little shed that had been put up for them. There were two little cots in there, but nothing else—no chair or table.

Hal soon made Tige understand that he had to guard the place, and the intelligent animal seemed to be very much pleased at the idea that he had something to do at last.

For a few hours the two boys sat in front of the building and talked. A policeman came along and ordered them away.

"We belong here," said Fred.

"Belong where?"

"Here in this building."

"Get out—go away, or I'll run you both in."

They rose up and ran into the building back to the quarters that had been put up for them.

"Come out of that!" called the officer, following them inside.

"See here, sir," called out Hal, "the owner of this building hired us to stay here all night as a watch."

"What're you giving me? They don't hire boys for such work."

"Come back here and see the beds that are here for us," and Hal struck a match and lighted the candle. The officer went in, looked at the two cots, and then grabbed both.

"Watchmen don't sleep on post. You two will sleep in the station house to-night," and he started to drag them out.

"Will you let me explain?" Hal asked him.

"Yes—explain away," and Hal told him about the dog that was to let them know if any intruders entered the place, adding:

"We work hard all day and earn six dollars a week at this."

"That don't go," and he started again with them.

"Tige! Here, Tige!" called Hal, whose grit was such as to make him revolt at being thus interfered with.

Tige went for the bluecoat.

The officer let go to defend himself. In the dark the dog had the advantage. He drew his revolver and fired three times, but Tige was not touched. His trousers were almost tore off, and both legs were bitten, and then he dashed out to the street, signaling for help.

Just as he dashed out to the street the foreman of the workmen engaged on the building came by to see how they were doing at the request of Mr. Wolff. He was surprised at seeing a crowd there, drawn by the pistol shots.

"What's the matter, boys?" he asked.

"Ah! There's the foreman!" cried Fred, and in half a minute he told the story of the interference of the officer. The foreman knew the officer on that beat, and told him that Mr. Wolff had really hired the boys to watch the building.

"Then I'll arrest 'em for setting the dog on me," said the enraged policeman.

"Better let 'em alone," said the foreman. "Mr. Wolff can make it hot for you if you take 'em away."

Two other officers came up and swore they would lock up the boys. Fred heard them and said to Hal:

"Come, let's skip out," and they slipped away through the crowd, went back to their old quarters, and spent the night there.

"This is tough," remarked Hal.

"Yes," assented Fred. "The police do some mighty queer things sometimes. The contractor or Mr. Wolff himself ought to have given us a written statement of some kind, to protect us. That cop didn't believe us, that's all."

"Well, I guess Tige has made it all right. I am satisfied if he is," and Hal could not resist the temptation to rejoice over the injuries the over-zealous and adle-pated officer had received.

On that night over \$50 worth of tools were stolen from the building.

The contractor was in a rage. He sent for Mr. Wolff, and when he heard the foreman's story he repaired to the chief of police and made complaint, after which he instructed his lawyer to prosecute the officer before the police commissioners.

In the meantime Hal went to Mr. Wolff's real estate office to tell his story. He waited there till he came in.

"You did right in setting the dog on him," said the old man, "and I am glad the officer was hurt. I have been to the station house to see about it, so you won't have any more trouble there. Go back at six o'clock and stay there. Let nobody you don't know enter the building."

They then went after the iron the carpenter had told them about, and in due time reached the place.

"Yes," said the old washerwoman. "I've got a big pile of old iron which nearly everybody in the block has been throwing over into my back yard for these three years."

"Well, the carpenter told us to come and see about it," said Fred.

"Oh, yes; I've been waiting for you to come. A man offered me three dollars for the lot, but I won't take that. Come and see it," and she led the way through the hall out into the back yard.

They both followed her, Tige remaining behind to guard the two push carts.

It was a good-sized pile, and in the lot Fred saw many old, worn-out, copper utensils, and a large quantity of lead that seemed to have been melted and run together in some big fire.

"How much do you want for it?" Fred asked her.

"Will you give me five dollars for it?"

"Yes," and he paid her the money.

Then they went to work taking the pile apart, picking out the copper and lead first, and carrying it out to the carts. It took them an hour to get a load into each cart, and just as they were ready to move off Hodge drove up with his wagon.

A glance told him he had lost the bargain, and he was in a rage with himself. The old woman was on the sidewalk, and called out to him:

"I told you I'd get more money than you offered me for that old iron."

"A man wants to buy as cheap as he can, mum," he replied. "I came round to offer you more. I'll give you ten dollars for the lot now, if you haven't closed the trade."

Then the woman was in a rage with herself.

"Why didn't you say so at first?" she cried. "You junkmen are all thieves, every one of you," and she ran into the house, slammed the door to, and locked it to keep Fred and Hal from going through after more. They each had a load made up of the most valuable part of the purchase.

"Now, Mr. Hodge," said Hal to the junkman, "you've interfered with us, and caused her to shut the door on us so we

can't get the balance of the stuff we have paid for. If you don't get that iron for us, I'll go to the police and tell them of that lead pipe deal of yours. Fred has told me all about it. Just because we are boys with push carts you think you can play dirty games on us. Now, put that in your pipe and smoke it. We'll be back here in a couple of hours, and if we don't get that iron I'll go in a hurry to the police station."

Hodge was flattened out.

He sat there and saw the two boys go off with their carts. When they were out of sight he got down from his wagon and went into the house to fix up the trouble with the old woman. It cost him five dollars to do so, as Hal found out when he and Fred called for the other loads.

They made a fine trade and were jubilant over it.

"Hodge will never forgive us," said Fred, "so we've got to look out for him."

That night they repaired to Wolff's building again to guard the property. The police did not interfere with them.

About midnight Hal heard Tige give several low, warning growls, and got up from his cot to see what the trouble was. He saw two men in front of the place talking and looking up at the new building. As they had not entered the premises he could not say anything to them. But as they were evidently inspecting the place, he crept forward in the intense darkness within, and soon got near enough to overhear them.

"I tell you this is the number," he heard one say—an old man. "But the old house has been torn down and another is going up on the old foundations."

"Then the box must have been found by some of the workmen," said the other, a younger man.

"No. It was buried in the center of the cellar, two feet deep. The workmen may have torn away the old foundations for the new house, but they would hardly deepen the cellar. The box is there yet, and is worth more than the lot and building times over, and we must get it."

CHAPTER XIII.

"I'M THE NIGHT WATCHMAN, SIR."

As he listened to the two men Hal quickly saw that they were there to enter the building, and go down to the cellar, which could only be reached by a ladder, as even the flooring had not yet been laid. They were after a buried treasure of some kind, and he was determined they should not get it without the consent of the owner of the property.

As the two men talked on in low tones he listened to catch more of the conversation.

"We can't find it without a light," said the younger of the two men, "and that would bring the police down on us."

"Yes, but we might shade the lantern so as to prevent its being seen. The old man told me where the exact spot is, so we needn't waste much time when we get at it."

"Well, we'll have to wait till to-morrow night, as we have no lantern or spade," said the other.

"Yes, and we can come around to-morrow and look at it when the men are at work," suggested the old man.

Then the two went away down the street, and Hal stepped out on the sidewalk to look after them. They soon turned the corner, and he sat down on a piece of timber to do some thinking.

"This is a mystery of some kind," he kept saying to himself mentally as he sat there. "What in thunder ought I to do about it? It's a buried treasure—which the old man said was worth more than this lot with the new building on it. He didn't say what it is—money or papers or something else, and it's been buried there a long, long time. They are going to come back to-morrow night with a lantern and a spade to dig it up. If we let 'em do it the foreman will see the hole the next morning and haul us up about it, and no matter what

sort of a story we may tell, it will lose us our job of watchmen. That won't do at all. But if it's theirs by good rights it is wrong not to let 'em have it. Hanged if I know what to do about it! I'm afraid to tell Fred. He'd get excited and say 'Let's dig it up!' right away. We'd have to dig up the whole cellar, for I don't know the spot. Hanged if I don't spend the day here to-morrow, and watch the old man when he comes around," and having come to that decision, he lapsed into silence.

Half an hour passed, and then he re-entered the building and made his way back to his cot, leaving to Tige the task of guarding the premises.

Both he and Fred were up with the sun, but they could not leave the place until some of the workmen came, and that would be near seven o'clock.

"Fred, you go and get your breakfast and then come back and let me go," Hal said to his partner. "We'll be ready to go to work then as soon as the men come."

"All right," Fred replied, and he went off down toward the avenue.

As soon as he was gone Hal went down into the cellar to look around. He found an immense quantity of old plaster, broken timber, and other debris of the old house, which had been torn down to give place for the new one.

"He said it was near the center," he muttered, as he glanced around the old cellar, which, perhaps, had been there thirty years or more. There was a pile of trash there at least two feet deep, and deeper in other places.

But he took in the position of everything at a glance, and then made his way all round the place to see if there was anything unusual about it. It looked to him very much as any other place would under similar conditions.

Fully satisfied about the situation down there, he made his way back up to the ground floor and waited till Fred should return from breakfast, which he did a few moments later.

"Where did you go?" Hal asked him.

Fred told him, and said he had a pretty good feed for little money and advised him to go to the place. He hurried off, taking Tige with him.

When he returned he found that some of the workmen had put in an appearance. Fred was ready to go over to old Polinsky's for their carts.

"Fred, you run your cart to-day and let me have a day off. I want to see Mr. Wolff and his lawyer. You know he went on my bond to keep me out of the House of Detention."

"Well, it won't take you all day to do that, will it?" Fred asked.

"I hope not, and as soon as I have attended to it I'll get my cart and go out, too, if it is not too late to do so."

"All right," said Fred, hurrying away to get his cart.

Hal then waited till the foreman came, and asked him if he could search the cellar for old junk.

"Yes, but you must not take anything away till I have seen it," was the reply.

"Of course not—and I am willing to pay for what I get."

"Well, if it's worth paying for you'll have to see the contractor. He is a pretty close sort of a man, I can tell you."

Hal laughed, and said he had found everybody pretty close in the city, and went down into the cellar to look around. He soon found quite a number of pieces of old iron, which he threw into a corner to give color to the claim that he was looking for such stuff.

Hours passed, and still he kept delving away at the pile of trash, confining himself principally to the center of the cellar, where he cleared quite a space. But on examining the cellar floor he found it solid and smooth, with no evidence that an excavation had ever been made there.

"It doesn't look like it," he muttered, as he looked around,

"but then it was a long time ago—before I was born—and it has been packed hard again. It must be here somewhere, for the old man said this was the number. An old house stood here, and he ought to know. I'll wait till he comes and watch him."

Two hours more passed, and still he was busy, but doing practically nothing. Then he saw a cane—a walking stick—fall down from above near the front, and looking up saw the old man and his companion of the night before.

"I let my cane fall through there," he heard him say to one of the workmen, "and would like to go down after it."

"Go ahead then," said the workman, and the two went down together.

Hal understood in a moment how the cane came to be dropped—to make an excuse for its owner to get down there.

The two descended the temporary stairs, but little better than a ladder, and walked around the cellar, glancing around in every direction.

On seeing Hal watching him the old man said:

"My lad, I dropped my cane through the front over there. It must be in that pile of trash. Will you get it for me?"

"Yes, sir," Hal answered, and he climbed over the pile and got the cane for him, keeping his eye on him, though, the while. He saw him point to the cleared space in the center of the cellar, and then measure the distance from the rear end with his eye.

When he returned with the cane, he heard the old man say:

"That's the spot—unless he lied on his death-bed—and that is a time when men don't lie."

"Here's your cane, sir," said Hal, presenting it to him.

"Thank you," and he handed him a half-dollar as he received the cane.

"Who owns this house, my lad?" he asked, a moment or two later.

"Mr. Wolff owns it, sir."

"And who is Mr. Wolff?"

"He is a rich real estate owner and dealer," replied Hal.

"Are you employed here?"

"I'm the night watchman, sir."

"Oh, indeed. Do you watch this property here?"

"Yes, sir."

"Don't you find it rather lonesome work?"

"Yes, sir, but it's the only work I can get just now."

"Yes, yes; one has to do the best he can in New York—take any sort of a job," and with that the two turned and went back up the little stairs.

CHAPTER XIV.

"IT IS SILVER," SAID THE JEWELER.

"He said this was the spot," said Hal, to himself, looking at the cleared space he had made in the center of the cellar. "It may be true, but it doesn't look like it. But then they had to cover it up well, I guess, to make it safe. Hanged if I know just what to do about it. It isn't mine, and I am not sure it's theirs. It seems somebody told him about it—on his death-bed—and he is now here after it."

Hal remained down there for some time longer, as if loath to leave the spot. It seemed to have a peculiar fascination for him. But he finally went up and looked around for the two men. They had gone away.

"I may as well go, too," he said to himself. "They won't come back here again till evening. Then they will try to play some sort of a game to get me out of the way. I'll have to be on my guard, or they may knock me out. Men in such matters care little for human life, and it has been so since the world began. I've read that in all histories."

He wended his way down to old Polinsky's place, and asked

for his cart. The old man told him to get it and bring in a load as quick as he could.

"What's the matter, old man?"

"Peeziness ish dull—nodings done all tay long," said the old Jew.

"Oh, you want to get rich too fast," laughed Hal.

"I vas nefer gedt rich at der peeziiness," and he shrugged his shoulders in a most deprecating way.

"Oh, you're worth a million now, and I know it," Hal laughed. "That's why I am in the business."

He shrugged his shoulders again, and Hal moved away with his cart.

It was the first time he was ever out by himself after scrap iron, and he wondered if he would be able to pick up a load. He had been at it long enough to understand that it required perseverance above all things, and next to know how much to pay for what he got.

He wandered for miles and miles, and at last struck a place where workmen were clearing the debris of a couple of large houses, which had been completely destroyed by fire a few days before.

"There ought to be a lot of old iron in there," he said to himself, as he looked on at the work. "I heard Fred say that a fire ruined all the iron piping and lead in a house, and that it was always good stuff to buy. I'll see if I can get any here."

He asked one of the men who had charge there, and was directed to a big rough-looking man standing near by.

He was the contractor.

Hal saw that at a glance, but he went up to him and asked if he would sell the old iron and other metal in the wreck of the building.

"Yes, I'll sell anything in there," he replied. "What are you paying?"

"I'll pay a cent a pound for all the metal in there."

"Won't pay for the lot in a lump?"

"Not unless I could see it, sir."

"How will you weigh it?"

"On the scales where I deliver it."

"But how do I know you will come back and pay?"

"I'll leave a deposit with you, sir."

"Very well. You will bring the weight marked by the dealer as he pays you, too, eh?"

"Yes, sir, though he is about the worst old rogue in New York."

"Why do you deal with him, then?"

"Because he is the only one I know. I hire my cart from him."

"How much do you pay him?"

"Fifty cents a week."

"Why don't you own a cart?"

"Because I have no place to keep it in," Hal replied. "If I left it on the street it would be stolen."

"I guess you are right. I'll let you have all the metal found in there at one cent a pound."

"And have your men throw it out in a separate place as they find it?"

"Yes."

"Is the place guarded of nights?"

"Yes, of course."

"Then it's a trade, if none of the stuff has not yet been taken out."

"Nothing has yet been taken out."

"All right, then. There's some of it round there now. Can I take it away?"

"Yes, if you leave a deposit."

"How much?"

"Five dollars will do."

"And if there isn't five dollars' worth in there will you return me the difference?"

"Yes, of course."

Hal handed him five dollars and went round to look at the pile of burned and twisted iron piping which had been thrown up by the workmen. There was quite a pile of it, and he was mentally calculating its weight when one of the men threw up a mass of stuff that looked like melted lead.

He knew that lead was worth more than iron, and copper still more. So he threw it into the cart the first thing, and then piled up such pieces of piping as had been bent in shape to be carried. When thus loaded he started off downtown to deliver it to old Polinsky. On reaching there he found Fred just going out, having delivered a load.

"Hello!" exclaimed Fred. "Where did you pick up that stuff?"

"Way uptown—three or four miles," he replied, "and there's a lot more of it, too. I want you to go up there with me."

"All right, I will," and he went over to Hal's cart and looked at the stuff. When he saw the mass of stuff which Hal had taken for lead he caught hold of it and tried to pull it out. But the iron on top of it prevented him from doing so.

"That's lead," said Hal.

"Well, you don't want to throw it with the iron, you know."

"Of course not," and Hal took out a piece, weight five or six pounds, and handed it to Fred. He looked at it for a moment or two, and then reached for his knife. Cutting it told him it was not lead—it was too hard.

"It isn't lead," said he.

"What is it, then?"

"Hanged if I know; it looks like silver."

"Silver! Thunder! It can't be silver."

"Well, it can't be lead, that's certain. I've handled enough to know it when I see it. This is hard, very hard, and white like silver. Throw out the iron and let this stay in the cart," and he went in with him and sold the iron to the old Jew.

Polinsky thought it was lead as he looked at it without handling it.

"I dakes dot leadt, too," he said.

"No, we won't sell this to-day," said Fred. "We are going to use it ourselves."

Polinsky shrugged his shoulders and turned away. He had learned that when those two boys said a thing they meant it to stand.

"Now, come out, Hal," said Fred, and he led the way out to the street, Hal following him with the cart.

"What are we to do with it?" Hal asked.

"Find out what it is," said Fred, taking up a piece of it and starting off up the street. "Wait here till I come back."

Hal waited, and Fred made straight for a jeweler's shop, which he found three blocks away. Entering, he held up a two-pound chunk of the metal, and said to a salesman:

"I bought this for old junk, thinking it was lead. It's too hard for lead. Will you tell me what it is, sir?"

The man took it and cut it with a knife, then stuck a magnifying glass to his eye and looked again.

"It's silver," he said.

"Just what I thought," said Fred.

CHAPTER XV.

THE TWO MEN WITH THE FLASK.

When he rejoined Hal, Fred's face told of the tremendous excitement under which he was laboring. He was quick to notice it, and eagerly waited to hear his report.

"Hal, it's pure silver, worth nearly twenty dollars a pound," said Fred.

Hal whistled and looked at the shapeless mass in the bottom of the push cart.

"There's all of fifty pounds in there," he said.

"Yes—one thousand dollars' worth."

"But whose is it?" Hal asked.

"Why, didn't you buy it?"

"Yes, but no one dreamed that there was silver in there."

"Well, you bought it for old metal, didn't you?"

"Yes; I agreed to pay one cent a pound for all the metal in the cellars of the two houses. The men who were cleaning out the place threw it up and said it was lead."

"Well, that makes it yours by fair trade, does it not?" Fred asked.

"It looks that way, but still I fear we may get into trouble. This is something valuable. It must have belonged to the family in the house, and was not a part of the house itself, hence it was not the contractor's when he sold it to me."

Fred was taken aback by Hal's reasoning, but in a moment said:

"Well, let the owner of it hold him responsible for it."

"But he will have me arrested and the stuff seized. That will put both of us in a bad light—if it doesn't get us locked up. How in thunder did it get there, anyway?"

"I guess it was a lot of silverware which was left when the family was driven out by the fire."

"In that case we'd be sure to get into trouble. I am going to take it to Mr. Wolff, and do just what he advises me to."

Fred was disappointed, and tried to dissuade him, but without avail. He pushed the cart way uptown to Wolff's office, and found he was not in. But the manager was there, and to him Hal told his story.

"You have done the right thing, my boy," the manager said to him. "You can leave it here till the rightful owner is found. If he is not found it is yours legally. You would be arrested on suspicion the moment you attempted to sell it. I'll have it weighed and give you a receipt for it in Mr. Wolff's name," which he did.

Later that day Mr. Wolff heard the story when he went to his office, and remarked:

"That boy is honest, if ever a boy was. He could have concealed it for years and finally used it."

When Hal and Fred went back for another load they hunted for more lead, and found quite a lot of the genuine article, which was easily recognizable when cut.

It proved to be a profitable trade Hal had made, and the contractor was satisfied with them. They took away all that had been thrown out by the men that day, and told the foreman they would come back on the morrow.

When six o'clock approached Fred and Hal, accompanied by the ever-faithful Tige, went to the building where they were to do night duty as watchers. The workmen were leaving when they reached there.

"See here, boys," said the foreman to Hal. "We are leaving a lot of tools here and want to find them where we left them when we come back in the morning. Don't let anybody go in there under any circumstances."

"All right, sir," said Hal.

As soon as they were left alone, Hal told Fred about the hidden treasure in the cellar. Fred was knocked silly by the story, and it took Hal some time to make him believe he was really awake and not dreaming.

"Well, what are you going to do about it—take it up and carry it to old Wolff, too?" asked Fred.

"Hanged if I know what to do," he replied. "I don't want to be arrested, locked up and sent to prison, and neither do you."

"No, I don't, but from what you say that stuff has been down there ever so many years, and the real owners of it may be dead."

"Yes, and if no one claims it that has proof of ownership, it

will fall to us—just as that silver will, so we can't make any mistake in taking it to Mr. Wolff."

"I am not so sure of that. He owns the land, and for that reason may claim what comes out of it."

That was a poser, and Hal was silent for a minute or two. He saw the full force of it, and finally said:

"Well, let's wait till those two men come here to-night and see what they have to say about it. They will try to get us out of the way so they can get at it. We must not let 'em come on the premises at all—that's what the foreman said, you know."

"Yes, and we won't let 'em, that's all."

"But we'll listen to what they have to say, and not let them suspect that we know their secret."

They sat out on the pile of timber in front of the house till about nine o'clock, when the two men came up. The old man recognized Hal as the youth who had told him he was the night watchman there, and spoke to him.

"You are on duty. I see," the old man said to him.

"Yes, sir—we both are."

"Both? Are you both employed as watchmen?"

"Yes, sir."

"That's queer. Does it take two men to watch a building in New York?"

"No, sir. It takes one man; but when it's a boy it requires two."

"Oh, I see," and he chuckled, as did his companion. "One boy is to watch the other one, I suppose, and see that he does not leave his post."

"No—it's because two boys are better than one man, as they keep each other company. We don't get tired or lonesome."

"Very good. What do you do in the daytime—sleep?"

"No, sir; we work all day long."

"Don't get any sleep at all, eh?"

"Oh, we take turns at sleeping."

"When—at night?"

"Yes, sir."

"Oh, I see—a very good arrangement—very good, indeed. That's a new wrinkle in night watching. Two boys at half price are worth more than one man at full price."

"That's it," laughed Hal.

"Well, it's a new thing to me," and the old man took a pipe and tobacco-bag from his pocket and proceeded to prepare for a smoke. "You don't mind my smoking here, do you?"

"No, sir. You are not in the building, you know."

"Can't allow smoking in there, eh?"

"No, sir. We have orders not to allow anybody to enter the building at night."

"Of course. That's what you are here for. Do you find any trouble about keeping people out?"

"No, sir. People seldom try to go in where there is a watchman. They know the police will arrest them if they do."

The old man lit his pipe and smoked, while his companion sat quiet and listened to the conversation. By and by he knocked the ashes from his pipe and put it in his pocket, after which he drew a flask from another pocket, drew the cork and said:

"I like a little taste of something good after a smoke. Try a taste yourself."

"I never took a drink of whisky in my life, sir," said Hal.

"Well, you haven't lived very long yet. Try it. You'll find it good."

"Thank you, sir—I don't care to."

"Well, maybe your partner would like to try it," and he tendered it to Fred.

Fred was not averse to tasting it, so he took the flask and placed it to his lips. Hal was on the point of knocking it from

his hand when he heard him take a good swallow of its contents.

"It isn't bad," said Fred, as he passed it back to the old man.

"No, it's good! Just try it—one swallow!" and he pressed it into Hal's hand.

"Thank you, sir; I don't care for it."

The old man then turned it up and pretended to drink—and so did his companion.

Ten minutes later Fred fell back on the timber as limp as though dead.

CHAPTER XVI.

HAL FINDS THE BURIED TREASURE.

When Hal saw Fred roll back on the timber, as though dead or suddenly fallen asleep, he sprang up and caught hold of his hand, calling out:

"Hello, Fred! Don't go to sleep here!"

But he could not arouse him. He pulled him around and shook him.

"Oh, let the boy sleep," said the old man. "I guess he is tired."

"But the police will take him in if they find him asleep here. It's against the law."

"Then we'll help you carry him in—if you want to get him away from here."

"I'll take him in myself, sir," and Hal sprang up and raised Fred in his arms.

"We'll help you," and the two men rose up, too, and started to follow him into the unfinished building. But he was now alarmed and suspected that something was wrong.

"Don't come in here, sir!" he called out sharply. "It's against the rules."

"Oh, never mind the rules! We'll go right out again," and they both followed him in.

"Here, Tige! At 'em!"

Tige was back in the building asleep. On hearing Hal call to him he bounded forward with a fierce growl.

The two men dashed out to the sidewalk as though a tiger had suddenly confronted them, whilst Hal went on to the little quarters in which he and Fred slept, and laid his partner down on his cot.

"They've drugged him," he said to himself, "but they can't play that game on me."

He sat down on the cot by Fred and wondered whether or not he should give the alarm and call for the police. But he heard Tige growling and could see the two men out on the sidewalk in consultation, and knew that they could not get in there as long as the dog was alive.

"Say, young man! Call off your dog!" he heard the old man say.

"The dog is where he belongs," answered Hal. "You'd better call yourself off."

"Why, what's the matter with you? Why did you set your dog on us?"

"The dog helps us guard the place."

"Well, that's all right. Is your friend asleep yet?"

"I don't know whether he's asleep or dead. I can't wake him up. What did you give him to drink?"

"Some good whisky. You saw me take a drink of it. Let me see him. Call off your dog."

"You can't come in here. It's against the rules."

"Then bring him out here and——"

"No. He stays where he is," and Hal was very firm in his tone. "I guess you had better go away now."

"Well, I am surprised at you. Do you want me to send a doctor to see him?"

"No, let him sleep."

The two men stood there on the sidewalk in whispered conversation for some time, and then they went away.

"Let nobody come in, Tige," said Hal to the dog, and then he went out to the front and looked down to the corner in quest of the two men.

"I understand it all now," he said to himself. "They meant to drug us both and then dig up the box. If it was theirs they could come and claim it like men. It is not theirs, and they shall not have it. When Fred wakes up I'll go to work and dig for it myself. Hang 'em, they shall not touch it if I can prevent 'em."

He sat there for upwards of an hour, thinking and nursing his wrath, and then returned to Fred to again try to arouse him. But all his efforts failed.

"If I could see a policeman I'd tell him all about it," he muttered, as he sat there in the dark for nearly another hour. By and by he heard Tige growl. On looking out he saw the old man and his companion standing by the pile of timber on the curb. The former tossed something to the dog which fell on the boards with a soft thud.

Instantly Hal thought of poisoned meat. He sprang to his feet and called:

"Catch 'em, Tige!"

The dog bounded out after them with a fierce growl, and savagely attacked both. They sprang upon the pile of timber, drew their revolvers, and began firing at him.

"Here, Tige!" Hal called, and the dog instantly returned to him, whilst the two men took to their heels.

Hal was examining the dog to find out whether or not he had been hit, when the policeman on that beat came running up and asked:

"Who fired those shots?"

"Two men shot at my dog, sir," he replied.

"Why did they shoot at him?"

"Because he would not let 'em come in here."

"Which way did they go?"

"Down toward the avenue. One is an old man with a beard."

"Would you know 'em again?"

"Yes, sir. They tried to get in here once before to-night, and I wouldn't let 'em. They came back and threw something in at the dog which struck the floor like a chunk of mud. I am going to look for it as soon as I can strike a light."

"Well, see what it is, and I'll go down the street to look for them," and the officer went away, leaving Hal to make his search alone.

Lighting a candle, Hal went in search of the missile thrown at his dog, and found a beefsteak—a two-pound slice—which had evidently been bought at some restaurant, though it had not been cooked.

"It's poisoned, as sure as fate," he muttered to himself as he looked at it, "and I'm going to keep it till I see whether or not they are arrested. I don't know what the law is about poisoning dogs, but if I get a chance at them again after to-night, I'll do some shooting myself. Lord, but I could shoot to kill when such men are the target."

Half an hour later he was sitting out there on the pile of timber when the officer came by again, and asked:

"Did you find out what it was they tossed to your dog?"

"Yes, sir. It was as fine a piece of beefsteak as you ever saw."

"What did you do with it?"

"It's inside there, sir."

"Let me see it."

Hal went inside and the officer attempted to follow him. A warning growl from Tige stopped him.

"That's all right, Tige," said Hal, and the dog was quieted.

"That's a good dog," said the officer.

"Yes, sir—one of the best in the world," replied Hal. "Just

come this way, please," and he led the way to a barrel, on which stood the lighted candle. Near the light lay a sirloin beefsteak, which Hal held up for the officer to see.

"That was bought at some restaurant near by," the policeman remarked, as he looked at it.

"Yes, sir, and I'll bet it's poisoned, too," replied Hal.

"Shouldn't wonder. Keep it here till I inquire at the restaurants down on the avenue," and the officer turned and went away again.

"Here goes for that box," muttered Hal as soon as he was out of the way. He put Tige on guard at the entrance of the building, and went down into the cellar with the candle. There he found an empty lime barrel in which he placed the light so as to throw its rays just where he wanted to dig, and yet prevent its being seen from the street. Then he procured a pick and spade and went to work. In all his life he never worked as hard as he did for one hour or more. He laid down the pick three times to use the spade, after which he resumed digging again.

By and by he struck a hard substance, and on examining found it to be the end of an oak board. He followed it and discovered that it was a box about ten by eighteen inches. Not a word did he utter, but worked on till he got it out of the hole, laid it by and proceeded to pack the loose earth back into the excavation he had made.

That done he raked a big lot of the debris over the spot, and threw a number of boards and empty lime barrels on top of it.

"Now for the box," and he lifted it up on his shoulder, taking the candle with his left hand, and made his way up to the little shanty where Fred was still soundly sleeping on the cot.

Just as he reached there he heard Tige growling again.

"Say, watchman!" called a voice.

"Well," answered Hal, shoving the box under the cot, "what is it?" and he looked out and saw the policeman there in front of the building.

"Come out here."

He went out, and the officer told him he had found the restaurant where the piece of steak had been bought.

"Give me the steak and I'll see if it has been poisoned. If they return here set the dog on them and chase 'em until they are caught."

"All right, sir," said Hal, as he gave him the piece of beef. The officer put it up in his handkerchief and went away with it. Hal then returned to the box, which he tried to open but could not, though a good deal of it had rotted in the ground. At last he decided to lie down and sleep, trusting to Tige to keep a good watch on the place.

CHAPTER XVII.

WHAT HAL DID WITH THE BOX.

When Hal awoke again it was a little after sunrise. He sprang up from his cot and looked over at Fred, who was still soundly sleeping as when he saw him last at midnight.

He went over to him and shook him violently by the shoulder, calling to him at the same time:

"Say, Fred, wake up, old fellow!"

But not until he had shaken him at least a half dozen times did Fred move or open his eyes. Then he looked up at Hal in a drowsy sort of way, and then closed his eyes again as though still very sleepy.

"Say, old fellow, it's time to get up!" Hal called to him, still shaking him, finally catching him around the neck and lifting him up to a sitting position on the cot, where he again shook him so roughly that Fred said:

"Well, I'm awake."

"Well, if you are, get up and shake yourself. You slept like a log all night."

"Well, didn't you sleep, too?" Fred asked, in a dull, drowsy sort of way.

"No. I had a deuce of a time of it all night. Get up and come out to the hose pipe, bathe your face and hands, and then you'll feel better."

"What's the matter with me?" Fred asked. "I don't feel right at all."

"Of course you don't. Come on and bathe your face and head." And they went out to where the hose-pipe was, which the workmen use for the purpose of mixing up their mortar. There Fred bathed his face and hands for several minutes, after which they went back into their little quarters, where Hal proceeded to enlighten him on all the incidents of the previous night.

The revelation completely electrified him.

"Great Scott, Hal!" he exclaimed. "What are we to do with the box?"

"I think the best thing to do is for you to go and get one of the carts and come back here with it before the workmen arrive. Then we can put it in there and push it around till we decide what to do with it. After all, I guess the best thing we can do is to take it to a bank and leave it in their charge until the question of ownership is settled. If nobody claims it, it will be ours."

"What bank will we take it to?" Fred asked.

"I guess we'd better go to the one where I caught that pick-pocket at the time he was going through Mr. Wolff."

"I guess that's the best thing to do," assented Fred, who hurried off down to old Polinsky's yard for his push cart, leaving Hal and his dog at the building until the workmen appeared. When he returned with the cart only two of the workmen had put in an appearance, who paid no attention to the boys when they placed a box and a few pieces of wood in the little cart and went away with it.

Soon after the bank opened farther uptown, Hal went in and asked one of the clerks if he could see the president of the bank.

"What do you want to see him about?" the clerk asked.

"Business, of course," he returned.

"Well, he hasn't come down yet, nor won't for an hour; but the vice-president is in his room."

"I guess he'll do," returned Hal. "How can I reach him?"

"Knock on the second door below there," returned the clerk, pointing to the door that led to the offices of the president and vice-president of the bank.

Hal went to the door, rapped on it, and heard a voice within say:

"Come in."

He opened the door and stepped inside, closing it behind him.

"Are you the vice-president of the bank?" he asked.

"Yes," was the reply.

"Well, do you recollect when Mr. Wolff's pocket was picked here in the bank some time ago?"

"Yes, what about it?"

"Well, I am the boy and this is the dog that caught the pick-pocket. I tell you this that you may know who I am and why I have come to you for advice."

"Ah! What is it?"

Hal then told him the story of how he became possessed of the knowledge of a box of jewels and other valuables being buried in the cellar of an old building that had been torn down, and a new one being erected in the place of it; that he and his partner had been engaged as watchmen on the premises, and had secured the box, which the old man and his pal had made such desperate efforts to get possession of.

"Now, I don't know who they belong to," he continued. "From what I heard the old man say they have been buried there for more than twenty years, and that somebody on his

deathbed had told him about it. If they are found in my possession I might be arrested, so I thought I'd bring them here to this bank and deposit them for safekeeping; so you can certify to my honesty in the matter, and if no owner is found for them they will be mine. And, on the other hand, if the owner does turn up, I ought to have something in the way of a reward for saving them from falling into the hands of another pair of villains."

"Where is that box?" the bank official asked.

"We've got it outside in front of the bank, sir, in a little push cart," replied Hal.

"Fetch it in here. Let me see it."

Hal went out and soon returned with the box, which he placed upon a small table near the desk of the bank official, who looked at it with a great deal of interest and remarked:

"I guess we'd better see what's inside of it before we go any farther."

"All right, sir. I'd like very much to know myself."

The vice-president of the bank tapped a bell on his desk, and a clerk very promptly responded.

"Bring me a hammer and chisel here," ordered the vice-president, and the clerk left the little office, to return a couple of minutes later with the implements, after which he retired to his post in the main office of the bank.

It took the bank official about ten minutes to open the box.

The sight that met his gaze as he raised the lid made him gasp with astonishment, for there lay before him glittering gems of almost priceless value—jewels of almost every style of make. Hal gazed at them also with breathless interest for a couple of minutes. Then he looked up at the vice-president and asked:

"Are they diamonds, sir?"

"Yes, and worth many thousands of dollars. I will count every one of them and give you a receipt for them, which you must take good care of, and let no one but your partner see it. You had better go and tell him to come in here."

Hal went out and summoned Fred, and together the two boys saw the precious stones taken out of the box, laid on the desk, and there counted. There were a dozen valuable gold watches, besides a lot of bonds, which were yellow and moldy.

"I don't think these bonds are worth anything," remarked the bank official, "as they could be duplicated on proof of loss, and doubtless were. If the owners of these jewels turn up and prove their right to them, I shall see to it that you are handsomely rewarded for your honesty, for there are very few who would have done as you two have."

With that he sat down and wrote a receipt for the deposit, which he gave to Hal, after which the two boys turned and left the bank.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FAKE OFFICER.

"Say, Fred," said Hal, as the two boys moved away from the vicinity of the bank, "did you ever see such a sight?"

"I never did," returned Fred. "They were all fit for a queen to wear."

"Yes; and as sure as you live every one of them was stolen before you and I were born, and probably from fifty different people. If nobody can prove ownership of them, they will be ours. It doesn't stand to reason that all the owners are yet alive; so it seems to me we are bound to fall heir to some of it."

"Yes," assented Fred. "What a streak of luck it is! It's like finding a gold mine."

"I'll tell you what I was thinking of doing, Fred. We can afford to take a day off and stay around the building there, to see if those two men turn up again. If they do, we can have them nabbed for drugging you and trying to poison Tige."

"All right," said Fred; "but I'll bet a dinner that they won't show up there again."

"Why not," Hal asked.

"Oh, they are not such fools as to go there and be caught."

"They may disguise themselves."

"They will if they go there at all, and so you had better be on the lookout for them."

"I will," and Hal went back to the building, whilst Fred returned to Polinsky's place to leave his cart there for the day.

Hal reached the place and saw two old gray-bearded men there looking around, as old men frequently do where new buildings are going up. When they saw him he noticed one give the other a nudge, and both watched him as he entered the place.

"What has brought you back here?" the foreman asked him.

"I let my pocketknife fall through the cellar last night, and had to wait till daylight to hunt for it," he replied.

"Well, go ahead and find it," returned the foreman, who thought nothing further of the matter, and Hal went down again into the basement and walked all around the place where he had dug up the box the night before to see if he had well covered up his tracks. He threw a good deal more of trash on the place, as though he was really looking for a lost knife.

By and by one of the two old gray-bearded men whom he had left in front of the place came down and began prowling about.

"Hello!" Hal called to him. "What are you looking for down here, sir?"

"Nothing at all," replied the old man.

"Well, you'll have to go back upstairs, sir, as it is against the rules for anybody but the workmen to come in here."

"Are you one of the workmen?" the old man asked.

"I am one of the watchmen here."

"Can you tell me who owns this building?"

"Yes, sir; it belongs to Mr. Wolff."

"Where can I find him?"

Hal gave him the address of the real estate office and remarked that he might find him there.

"Are you on duty now?" the old man asked, as he turned to go up the steps.

"No; I go on duty at night."

"Then you could go with me to find the owners, couldn't you?"

"No. I lost a knife here last night, and I'm looking for it."

"Well, let me help you search for it."

"No, sir; you must go up to the street. I don't want the boss finding any fault with me, and if he sees you down here he'll talk pretty rough to you if he doesn't kick you out."

The old man went back up and joined his companion out on the street, and he had no sooner done so than the thought flashed through Hal's mind that he was one of the two men who gave him so much trouble the night before, so he followed him up and stood near both of them out in front of the building, gazing at them as though he suspected something wrong. Suddenly he spoke up:

"Both of you men have got on false beards. You were here last night, and if you come around here again to-night I'll have a double-barreled shotgun ready for you."

"What in the world are you talking about, young man?"

"Oh, I know what I am talking about," Hal replied. "Here comes an officer now, and I'm going to put him on to you."

"Oh, well," said the man, "I don't want any trouble with a boy," and the two turned and walked down the street, disappearing in a saloon before the officer, who was coming from another direction, came up to where Hal was standing. Hal decided not to say anything to the officer, and he passed on down the street, and he saw no more of them that day. When

Fred joined him at six o'clock, as the men struck off work, he was told of the visit of the two men with long, gray beards.

"Oh, they'll come back again," said Fred, "to play us some kind of trick to get us out of the way, so they can dig for the box."

"Well, they'll have a sweet time of it," laughed Hal. "for we've got it where they can't get at it. If it wasn't that I am afraid they'd set the building on fire just for spite I'd get out of the way for awhile, just to let them find out that the box is gone."

He little dreamed of the method of the trick the two villains would resort to, to get them out of the way that night.

"They were sitting on a pile of timber in front of the building when one of the men came up, accompanied by a policeman."

"There they are, sir," said the man to the policeman at his side, as he pointed to both Hal and Fred.

"You are sure of it, are you?" the officer asked.

"Yes. I guess they won't deny it themselves."

"Deny what?" Hal asked.

"That you set your dog on me last night as I was passing here with a friend, and we saved ourselves from being bitten by shooting at it."

"Yes, I did set the dog on you," said Hal, "because you tried to enter the building when we told you to keep out. We are night watchmen here, officer."

"Well, the captain has sent me around here to bring you two to him," said the policeman, "so you'll have to go with me to the station. If you make satisfactory explanations to him, he may turn you loose. So come ahead."

There was no help for it, so the two boys started off with the officer, accompanied by their accuser. They were both very much astonished at the audacity of the man, under the circumstances. Hal was unwilling to leave Tige in charge of the building, so he called to him to follow.

The policeman walked them for nearly an hour, turning through various streets, avoiding other policemen, until Fred asked him what station he was taking them to.

"Don't worry about that," was the reply. "I'm going to take you to headquarters."

Nearly another hour passed, and finally the policeman entered a saloon with them and sat down at a table. He took a drink of beer, pretending at the same time to keep a strict watch on the boys. Finally he said to one of the barkeepers:

"Keep your eye on these two boys for me about five minutes," and with that he turned and entered the toilet-room.

No sooner was he out of sight than Fred whispered to Hal:

"Come. Let's skip."

"All right," said Hal. "Lead the way."

Fred made a plunge for the door, and went through like a thunderbolt, with Hal and the dog close behind him. They ran down the street a couple of blocks before they stopped, where Fred said to Hal:

"Say, old man, they played it fine on us."

"How?" Hal asked.

"Why, he was a fake cop."

"What!" gasped Hal.

"Sure. That fellow was no more of a policeman than I am. He either bought or hired a uniform and played us for suckers, and I'll bet you my share of the stones in that box in the bank vault that when we get back we'll find that they have been at work in that hole down in the cellar."

"Well, let's hurry back. Maybe we'll catch them at it."

They hurried away, jumping upon a passing street car, where Hal stood upon the rear platform, where he could see Tige, as the conductor would not allow the dog to board his car.

CHAPTER XIX.

HAL AND FRED SET UP FOR THEMSELVES.

Naturally the boys lost no time in returning to the building. They both went in, making their way back to their quarters, where Fred struck a match and found everything all right. Even the piece of candle which they had used the night before was lying where they had left it. Hal lighted it and led the way down into the cellar.

"Great Scott, Fred!" he exclaimed. "Look there; they have been here," and as he spoke he pointed to the spot in the center of the place where the trash had been raked away and the hole that he had dug the night before half emptied.

"Yes, they've been here," said Fred, "and have satisfied themselves that we were one ahead of them. We must push the dirt back into the hole and pile the trash on top of it."

"All right. Come ahead," replied Hal, and the two set to work to throw the trash back over the excavation. It took them a half hour or so to finish the job, after which they went back up to their quarters, laid down on their cots, leaving the dog to watch the premises.

That was the last they ever saw of the two men who were searching for the buried treasure.

"Now, Fred," said Hal to his partner one day, about a month after the incident related in the previous chapter, "I think it's about time that we had a horse and wagon, instead of using push carts."

"Yes, I think so, too," assented Fred. "But before we buy one we must find a place where we can keep the horse, because it costs something to stable a horse in this city."

"What's the matter with taking a vacant lot somewhere, buying second-hand lumber, and putting up a shed for the horse and wagon?" suggested Hal.

"That is all right, if you can get a vacant lot at the right figure," returned Fred. "The great trouble will be to find one in the right place. If we could get that old corner in the next block, below Polinsky's place, it would be worth twice as much to us than would a place a half a mile away from there, because junkmen are in the habit of delivering loads down in that section."

"Well, let's see about it," said Hal.

They pushed their carts down to Polinsky's place, where they turned them in empty.

The old man shrugged his shoulders and the boys went away. On the next corner they stopped in front of an old vacant frame building, which had been without an occupant for more than a year.

They found out from an old truckman that the property belonged to an estate which could neither be sold nor improved until someone died. He told the boys where they could find a man who could tell them all about it. They went to him, and found that he was simply an agent of the estate.

"We want to rent that old house," said Fred to the agent.

"What do you want with it?" the agent asked.

"Junk business."

"How much money have you got?" the agent asked.

"Oh, that's a business secret," laughed Fred.

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do," said the agent. "The house on the place isn't worth anything except for just such business as that. You'll have to put glass in the windows, probably locks on the doors, and do a lot of cleaning up. I'll let you go in there for five dollars a month for the first year, ten dollars a month for the second year, after which it will depend upon the amount of business you do."

"All right, then. We'll pay three months in advance, with the understanding that we can put up sheds in the yards and cut a gate in the fence."

"That's all right," returned the agent.

On inspecting the place the boys found that all the timbers

in the old building were sound, but the floors were horribly dirty, and the plastering broken off in many places in the old storeroom. The whole place was over-run with rats, the rodents scampering in every direction when the boys entered it.

"Oh, but won't Tige have fun catching them," laughed Hal.

"Is he a ratter?" Fred asked.

"Oh, he'll catch anything from a mouse up to an elephant," and with that he opened the door that led down into the cellar and sent the dog down the stairs with an order to "Catch 'em!"

For some ten or fifteen minutes there was a tremendous racket down in the cellar. The dog was having his fun, tackling rats as big round as a man's wrist. It was fun for the dog, but death to the rats.

"Now, Hal," said Fred, "we've got to spend a little money cleaning up this old house."

"Well, let's get at it, then," and they left the old house to go in search of two scrubwomen, to whom they gave a week's job in cleaning it out. Then they bargained with a carpenter and a glazier, and at the end of a week they found they had paid out about a hundred and fifty dollars.

During that time the boys busied themselves helping Tige rid the place of rats. It was a week of splendid sport for them, and they enjoyed it with all the relish of two hearty, healthy boys.

"Now, Fred," said Hal, when the work was finished, "we want to put a sign up over the door—Smith & Horton, or Horton & Smith. We'll toss up a penny to see which it shall be."

"Heads up, it will be Horton & Smith."

The penny fell heads up, and they forthwith ordered a sign painted "Horton & Smith, Junkmen."

Two days later the sign was up over the door, and inside was a space ten by fifteen feet, inclosed by a neat railing, with chairs and desk, as an office.

"Now, Hal, old man," said Fred, "I'll just hang around the block for the first week, stopping every junkman that comes along on his way to Polinsky's and the other two dealers, and will show you how to deal with them."

"All right," laughed Hal; and Fred went out on the street.

In less than ten minutes a junkman whom he had known for a couple of years came by with a heavy load on his wagon.

"Say, Tom," Fred called out to him, "taking that down to the old Jew?"

"Yes," answered the junkman.

"Give me a chance to buy it?" said Fred.

"Thunder!" exclaimed the junkman, as he looked up at the sign. "Have you set up for yourself?"

"You bet we have, and we are going to deal square with everyone who comes to us."

"All right, then. Just look at my stuff here, and make me an offer."

Fred examined it very carefully, and told him what he would give for it.

"All right," said the junkman. "Where do you want it thrown out?"

"Drive around the corner, through the gate and into the yard."

It was their first load, and the junkman was so well pleased with his sale that he promised to bring every load to them before letting either of the other dealers get a chance at it. Hal gave him a handful of business cards to give to the other junkmen, and the result was, within twenty-four hours, they had bought and paid for more than a dozen loads.

CHAPTER XX.

"YOU'VE DONE PRETTY WELL, MY BOY."

The rival junkmen were much exercised over the advent of another firm in their vicinity. The gatherers of old junk were

nearly all native Americans, like Hal and Fred, and naturally preferred to trade with them. The two young merchants treated them with so much consideration, laughing and joking with them, that they succeeded in getting not only their good will, but their confidence, and the result was that they had all the trade they could handle.

They soon found that more capital was required, unless they could make good sales of their stock.

"If we force a sale we'll lose," said Fred. A fact which Hal knew as well as he did.

"I am going to borrow some money from Mr. Wolff," remarked Hal.

"I don't believe you can do it," returned Fred.

"Well, I'll try it, anyway," and he put on his hat, made his way uptown to the real estate office of the old man, for whom he had once saved one thousand dollars.

"Mr. Wolff," said Hal, "I want to borrow five hundred dollars from you."

The old man caught his breath as though a bucket of ice water had been dashed over him, and he looked the astonishment he felt. Without waiting for the old man to ask any questions, Hal explained to him how he and young Smith had set up in the junk business for themselves, and that they had accumulated stock so fast that their capital was exhausted.

"We've got over a thousand dollars' worth of stock, at the market price, on hand now," he added, "to say nothing of the fifty-pound chunk of silver lying here in your office. So you see we are making money hand over fist, while our expenses are almost nothing."

The old man opened his eyes as he listened to the story.

"You've done pretty well, my boy, considering that you reached the city but a few months ago without a dollar in your pocket."

The old man filled out a check for five hundred dollars, payable to himself, and sent one of his clerks to the bank for the money. When it came he handed it over to Hal without saying a word.

Hal thanked him, thrust the money in his pocket, and as he turned to leave the office, stopped and said to Tige:

"Tige, salute him."

The dog stood up on his hind feet and raised his hind paw up to his ear, like a soldier giving a military salute, after which he turned and trotted out of the office, leaving the old real estate dealer and his clerk very much amused.

"Did you get it, Hal?" Fred asked, as the former entered the office.

"Yes," and he drew the roll of bills from his pocket as he spoke.

Fred whistled his astonishment, for he really had no hope that the old man would lend him a dollar.

"Great Scott, Hal, just look out there!" and Fred pointed through the window at the wagon of old Hodge, who had stopped in front of their place.

Just then the old junkman entered the office and greeted the two boys as cheerily as a cricket.

"Why haven't you been around before this?" Hal asked him.

"Well, I had a sort of contract with old Polinsky," was the reply. "What are you boys paying for iron now?"

"That depends upon the grade," replied Fred. "What we say we will pay, we'll pay, and never waste a minute haggling about it. I've known you to lose one hour haggling with old Polinsky for twenty-five cents."

"Well, twenty-five cents an hour is good pay," laughed the old junkman.

"Drive around into the yard," suggested Hal.

The old man went out and drove around through the gate into the rear of the store, where Fred inspected the load and told him what he would give for it per pound.

"All right," and the old man proceeded to throw it out close by the scales on which the stock was to be weighed.

Fred stood by looking on, until about a five-foot piece of lead pipe was thrown out.

"I don't want this," he said, picking the pipe up and throwing it back into the wagon.

"All right," laughed the junkman, who went on throwing other stuff out.

Fred weighed the old iron and wrote down the number of pounds on a piece of paper, which he gave to Hodge and told him to go into the office, where Hal would pay him. Hodge drove through the gate, which Fred closed and fastened, and afterwards entered the store by the back door. As he entered he looked back and saw the piece of lead pipe fly over the fence and fall on the pile of old junk.

The old man had thrown it back after he drove through the gate. Fred turned and ran out, picked up the piece of pipe, entered the house with it, passed out the front door, where he deposited it in the old junkman's wagon as the latter was in the office getting his pay. He re-entered the store mad enough to fight, for he knew the old man, by throwing the piece of lead pipe back onto the pile, was scheming for the arrest of Hal and himself, and thus to break up the business. He managed to keep Hodge there by talking with him until he saw an officer on the other side of the street, then he stepped out and gave a whistle that attracted the policeman's attention, when he beckoned to him.

The officer went over and asked:

"What is it?"

"Look in the wagon, there," said Fred.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE RAPID RISE OF HORTON & SMITH.

The policeman looked into the wagon and saw the piece of lead pipe lying there. The law was very stringent about new lead piping being found in the possession of junkmen.

"Whose wagon is this?" the officer asked of Fred.

"The owner is named Hodge," was the reply, "and he's inside the store there now. I bought his load of iron, but refused to take that."

"All right; I'll take it," said the officer, "and him, too." And with that he stepped inside the store, laid his hand on Hodge's collar, saying:

"Here, I want you."

"What's the matter?" Hodge asked.

"It's a little matter of lead pipe," replied the officer.

"I ain't got no lead pipe," blurted Hodge.

"Is that your wagon out there?"

"Yes."

"Well, there's some lead pipe in it, so you come along to the station."

"There ain't no lead pipe in my wagon," said Hodge.

"Oh, yes, there is," and the officer led him out to the wagon, where he saw the piece of pipe which he had tossed over the fence into the yard, after passing out through the gate.

The old rascal glared at Fred, as though he wanted to spring at him and clutch him by the throat.

The policeman marched Hodge off to the station, and the next day he was held in five hundred dollars' bail, which old Polinsky had to give to prevent him from making revelations that would land him in prison also.

So the business went on, increasing in volume almost daily.

The boys bought furniture and fitted up four rooms upstairs, and Hal sent for his mother to come to the city and keep house for him. She came gladly, and was charmed with the neat quarters that had been provided for her. She was even more happy when she learned from Hal what the business

promised in the future. He had not neglected her, for every month he had sent her money to keep her in her little home at Buford in quiet comfort.

Time passed on, and the business had increased so fast that more room was required. They bought extra wagons and horses, and hired men to attend to them. They paid all bills promptly, and dealt on the square in every transaction. One of their rivals, the Austrian, three blocks below, sold out to Polinsky and moved over to Brooklyn.

In another year Polinsky made them an offer to sell out, stating that he intended to retire from business.

"All right," said Hal to the old Jew, "we'll give you the market price for all the stuff you have, but not a cent for the good will."

The old fellow kicked on that, demanding two thousand dollars for the good will of his place.

"The good will isn't worth a cent," returned Hal, "for you haven't the good will of a single junkman in the city."

The old fellow finally offered to take one thousand dollars for the good will of the place, and Fred advised Hal to take it.

"I wouldn't give ten cents for it," replied Hal, whose grit rather staggered his partner.

"It's an old, old stand," replied Fred, "and known to every junkman on Manhattan Island."

"Very true," assented Hal, "but we can't run both places. We simply want his stock and close up the place."

So the trade was not made, and a month or so later Polinsky sold out to another dealer, who took possession of it, and gave the boys a hard push for business.

By this time Hal was as well posted about the business as Fred was, and could make as good a trade in the purchase of junk as could his partner.

One day the news came to them that the estate to which the store belonged was to be divided up and probably sold, the party owning it having died. The agent of the property notified them that after the property was sold they might be served with notice to vacate by the new purchaser, and that disturbed them not a little. They attended the sale and found that Mr. Wolff was among the bidders. Fred told him that if he purchased the property they would lease it for a term of years and thus make it profitable to him as an investment, whereas for years it had paid no income that would pay half the taxes on the place.

"Don't tell anybody else that," advised the old man, "as it will cause others to bid more for it."

"All right," replied Hal, and so the old man bought the property at a low figure, as others who had bid on it based their bids upon calculation that expensive buildings would have to be put up on the place in order to make it a paying investment.

After the sale he leased the property to Hal individually for a term of twenty years, at a figure that was based entirely upon the bare land, as the buildings on it were practically worthless, yet at the same time were all that were necessary for the junk business.

A few months after Hal had leased the property a firm of warehousemen bought four lots adjoining it for the purpose of building a large storage house there. They offered Hal ten thousand dollars bonus for his lease, which he promptly accepted, and a few days later they bought out the man in the block below who had succeeded Polinsky. Thus they remained in the same vicinity, and were now at the oldest stand in the line of business in the whole city. They hired carpenters and made extensive alterations, adding an upper story to the old building, making an extremely pleasant home for Hal and his mother.

Hal was now twenty years old, and had become one of the shrewdest young business men in that part of the city.

During all this time the bank with whom they had deposited the box of jewels found in the cellar of one of Wolff's buildings had extensively advertised for the owners of the jewels, stating that they had probably been stolen or lost a quarter of a century, and asking them to come forward and prove property. After two years not a single owner had put in an appearance, so by order of the court they were returned to the finder.

CHAPTER XXII.

HOW HAL PROPOSED TO MYRA.

When the contents of the box were turned over to the boys by the bank, they employed a jeweler, who was an expert in the value of precious stones, to divide them into equal parts; and when that was done, each took his share to do with as he pleased, as it was capital not invested in the junk business. Hal selected several beautiful gems and presented them to his mother, after which he ordered the others sold, and with the proceeds bought a beautiful home in the upper part of the city, in which he installed his mother and a couple of servants to do the household work.

Soon after that he was walking down Broadway, when he met coming out of a dry-goods store old Farmer Henderson, at whose place, out in Connecticut, he had stopped whilst trudging on his way to the city to seek his fortune. The old man had a couple of bundles under his arm, and just behind him was his wife.

"Hello, Mr. Henderson," he exclaimed.

"Well, hello," returned the old man, looking at him suspiciously.

"Don't you know me?" Hal asked.

"Can't say I do. You ain't one of them bunco fellers, be you?"

"Why, lands sake," exclaimed the farmer's wife, "I know you, and I'm right glad to see you," and she extended her hand to Hal.

"Thank you, madam, I'm glad to see you," said Hal, shaking her hand with a great deal of cordiality.

"Why, father," she cried, turning to her husband, "don't you know the boy and his dog from Buford, who stopped with us three years ago?"

"By gum!" ejaculated the old man, as he stared at Hal. "Be you the chap?"

"Yes, sir," laughed Hal.

"Well, well! How you have growed! And there's the dog, too."

"Yes," laughed Hal. "Tige has stuck to me like grim death all the time."

"And have you been in the city ever since?" asked Mrs. Henderson.

"Yes, madam. I've been so busy I've had no time to leave town for a single day."

"What! Haven't you been back to see your mother?"

"No. I sent for her, and she is now here with me. We've got a nice home here in the city. I wrote and told her how kind you were to me, and I am sure she would be glad to see you. So you must stop with us while you are here."

"Oh, we came in to go back on the evening train," said Mrs. Henderson, "and the girls will be uneasy if we don't."

"Oh, you come and go up to the house with me," insisted Hal, "and I'll send a telegram out to the girls telling them where you are." So he persuaded them to go in a street car, and half an hour later astonished his mother by leading them into the house and telling her who they were. Of course, she gave them both a hearty welcome, and in a few minutes the two mothers seemed to have known each other all their lives. She told the Hendersons how Hal had succeeded in business, and had bought a beautiful little home for her.

"By gum!" exclaimed the old farmer, "I knowed he had good stuff in him the moment I set eyes on him."

Mrs. Horton finally persuaded the old man and his wife to stop over with her till the next day, whilst Hal telegraphed out to the girls that they would return a day later.

That evening Hal begged his mother to exact a promise from the old farmer and his wife that their two daughters should come to the city and stay a month with them.

"I'll tell you, mother," he said, "they are good girls, and they will be company for you here, where you stay all day with only two servants in the house."

She promised him that she would do so, and when she suggested it to the farmer's wife the latter promptly agreed, as they had no acquaintances in the city with whom the girls could spend even a day, and here was a chance for them to stay a month and see all the sights of which they had heard so much.

A week later the two girls came to the city, and Hal met them at the depot. The younger of the two sisters, Myra, who bid him such a safe journey when he left the old farmhouse on his wearisome tramp to the city, was now a beautiful girl of eighteen years of age.

"I am glad to see you," he greeted both of them. "I have dreamed of both of you a thousand times," and the admiring glance that he gave Myra caused the modest country girl to blush in spite of herself.

Mrs. Horton greeted the girls in a loving, motherly way, making them feel perfectly at home within a few minutes after their arrival. She had been a dressmaker out at Buford ever since her husband died, and had now been in the city long enough to catch on to the fashions of dress, and as their father had given them a nice little sum of money, she soon had them dressed in a way that entirely eliminated the country from their appearance. They came to stay a month, and at the end of four weeks Esther, the eldest of the two sisters, remarked at the breakfast table one morning that it was time for them to go home.

"No, it isn't," said Hal. "It's time for you two to begin another month here."

"Oh, my," exclaimed Esther, "we couldn't think of it. It would be an imposition."

"It will be a still worse imposition if you go home," he replied, "for it will put me to the expense of going out there at least once a week, and I know that my partner will feel the same way."

"Well, I hope you will come out to see us, for I'm sure we'll be ever so glad to see you."

"Oh, you're not going home," said Hal, very bluntly. "You two girls may just as well make up your minds to it that you are going to settle down in New York and stay here."

"What! Stay here!" exclaimed Esther.

"Yes. I know a young man who is very anxious to keep you here, and it was only yesterday that he asked me if I thought he could persuade you to do so, and I told him I thought he could if he would just come out like a man, tell you that he loved you, and ask you to be his wife."

"Oh, my!" cried both the sisters. "Who in the world is it?"

"Well, it's Fred, my partner, and he's just gone on you, Esther."

Esther blushed like a rose, while her heart beat so fast she was compelled to leave the table. Myra arose to follow her, when Hal caught her by the hand, pulled her back into the chair and said:

"And Fred's partner wants you to be his wife. Now, why should either of you go back home?"

"Oh, I won't go if you wish me to stay," she replied.

"I do wish you to stay," said he, "and mother does, too. She

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will be a good mother to you, and I know you will be a loving daughter to her."

Myra sprang up from the table and ran up the stairs, burst into the room that she and her sister had been occupying, threw her arms around Esther's neck, kissed her and cried out:

"Oh, sister, Hal has asked me to be his wife. I am so happy I don't know what to say or do."

"Did you tell him you would?" Esther asked.

"I really don't know whether I did or not, but I believe I did say I wouldn't go home if he wished me to stay. I'll go right back and tell him," and as she started to leave the room she met Mrs. Horton at the door.

They ran into each other's arms, and when Mrs. Horton told her that she was so glad to have her for a daughter, she replied that she was the happiest girl on earth.

"And now, my dear," said Mrs. Horton, turning to Esther, "Hal says Fred wants you. He is a good boy, a money maker, and well able to take care of you. If you love him I would advise you to accept him, for after Hal sees him, he will come up this evening and propose to you."

"Oh, I like him ever so much," replied Esther.

"Then it's all right, dear, and after you are both married you must come here and live with me, for we have plenty of room in the house."

With that Mrs. Horton returned downstairs, accompanied by Myra, who spent an hour with Hal in the parlor.

CHAPTER XXIV.**CONCLUSION.**

Notwithstanding the engagement of the two girls to Hal and Fred, they insisted on returning to their home on the farm, where they would make preparations for the coming

event, and a few days later they left the city, each taking with her a letter from her sweetheart, addressed to her parents, asking for their consent to their marriage. Hal vouched for Fred as being in every way a worthy young man, who was amply able to take care of a wife.

Of course, the old farmer and his wife consented, and preparations were at once begun for a double wedding at the old home a couple of months later.

In the meantime Hal and Fred devoted themselves to business, attending in person to the smallest details. They were compelled to keep up a strict watch on every load of stuff they bought, to see that no violations of law were made. They were annoyed a great deal by tramps who persisted in climbing the fence at night to sleep under the open shed, where they would be out of the reach of policemen. Of course, there was hardly anything kept out there that would pay a tramp to steal. At the same time they were an undesirable acquaintance. They managed, however, to keep at peace with their rivals as well as with the police. It was done, though, only by perseverance with that end in view always.

The old junkman, Hodge, however, was an implacable enemy. He never forgave them for his arrest and imprisonment, and when he came out after serving his term, he was forced to commence anew with a push cart instead of horse and wagon. Often Hal found, on inspecting the yards early in the morning, pieces of copper and lead piping that had evidently been thrown over during the night. He invariably gathered them and threw them over into the street, where they were soon picked up and taken away by boys or tramps; sometimes by reputable citizens in the neighborhood. It was done so often that one night Hal resolved to stand guard, and by the aid of Tige to capture the offender.

A little after midnight, while on the watch, he saw a man

pass in the rear of the yard and hurl something heavy over the top of the shed into the yard. Hal dashed up to him and called out:

"What was that you threw over there, sir?"

"None of your business," replied the man, in a muffled tone of voice.

"Yes, it is my business. That's my yard over there, and you'll go with me to the police station unless you make some explanation that is satisfactory," and he started toward him.

The man drew a pistol and pointed it almost in Hal's face, saying:

"You keep away now, or I'll slug you!"

Hal happened to be unarmed, as he depended more upon the dog to help him out than upon any weapon he could carry, so he recoiled before the muzzle of the revolver. At first he thought of setting the dog on him, but was afraid that the faithful animal might be shot; so great was his affection for Tige that he preferred to let the man escape than have the dog hurt.

"That's all right," he said to the man; "go ahead. I'll have a gun myself the next time you come around."

He heard the man chuckle dryly to himself as he turned and walked away. He followed him, however, keeping behind some forty or fifty feet, until, after passing two blocks, he met a policeman who turned the corner. Then he called out:

"Officer, arrest that man there, he drew a gun on me," and at the same time he ran forward to join the officer, who was pretty close to the man who had stood him off. To his surprise, the man wheeled around with his revolver, and threatened to kill both him and the officer if they bothered him.

"Oh, I've got a gun, too," said the officer very promptly, drawing his weapon; "so just drop that pistol, or I'll drop you."

"Not much I won't," and to Hal's astonishment, the fellow deliberately fired at the policeman, who was not more than a dozen feet away from him, and the bullet knocked the hat off from the policeman's head.

The officer returned the fire and the other replied as coolly as an old soldier, both emptying their weapons without hitting each other. Then the man took to his heels.

"Catch him, Tige," yelled Hal. "He hasn't got any more bullets."

The faithful dog gave chase and caught up with the man in the middle of the block, and there ensued a terrific fight between the two. The man was compelled to stop, to avoid being torn by the dog. He kept Tige from doing him much injury by using the revolver as a club. Both Hal and the officer ran up and joined in the attack, when a well-directed blow with the locust in the hands of the officer stretched the man on the pavement. Hal called the dog off, and then made the discovery that the desperate fellow was none other than old Hodge, the junkman.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" he exclaimed, but Hodge was too dazed to say anything, for the policeman had dealt him a terrific blow on the head.

"Do you know him?" the officer asked of Hal.

"Yes, sir; he's a junkman of the name of Hodge. He has been on the Island for selling lead pipe. I'm a dealer in old junk myself, and I was on the watch to-night to see who it was that had been surreptitiously throwing lead pipe over into our yard. This man came by and threw something over, and when I accused him he drew his gun on me, so I had to follow him until I saw you."

"Come with me to the station," said the officer, "and make that charge against him, after which I will go with you to see what it was that he threw over into your yard."

Hal went with him to the station, where he told the story and saw the vengeful old junkman locked in a cell, after which

the arresting officer went with him to his place of business, where they found about ten feet of lead pipe in a coil, lying opposite where the man was seen to throw something over the fence. It was taken to the police station, to be used as evidence in the prosecution of the prisoner.

When they returned to the station the sergeant told the officer that the prisoner was unconscious and groaning in his cell, remarking:

"You must have given him a pretty hard blow."

"Why shouldn't I hit him hard?" said the officer, "when he had fired five shots at me?"

"Oh, that's all right," said the sergeant. "You'd have served him right if you had split his head open. All the same, you had better call up the doctor and let him see how badly hurt he is."

The police surgeon was sent for, who promptly came and made an examination of the prisoner's hurt.

"His skull is fractured," he said, after a minute or two, "and I guess he's a goner."

The old junkman was talking incoherently all the time. Several times Hal heard his own name and that of Fred on his lips, coupled with threats. Then followed other expressions that told that some great secret preyed upon his mind, but nothing tangible could be made of anything he uttered.

Hal finally left the station and returned home. The next morning when he went down to the office, he found a policeman there, who informed him that the junkman was dead.

"Sorry to hear it," he said. "That ends the case against him." And so it did.

A month later Hal and Fred, accompanied by Mrs. Horton, went out to the old Henderson farm in Connecticut, where a double wedding took place. Hal had made the little girl who spoke kindly to him as he was tramping towards the city to make his fortune, the partner of the fortune he had earned. They returned to the city with their brides and attended to business as though nothing unusual had occurred in the current of their lives. It was not until three years later that Mr. Wolff, the real estate owner, found out that Hal had dug up a buried treasure, to the value of sixty thousand dollars, in the cellar of a lot owned by him. It seemed that the vice-president of the bank had told him the story, and the old man became furiously angry because Hal had not brought the box to him that was found on his property, and from that day till he died he was the bitterest enemy that Hal ever had. But for all that the boy from the country went on in the even tenor of his way, piling up his wealth by industry and strict attention to business, and thus ends the story of "Hal Horton's Grit; or, A Plucky Lad's Rise to Wealth."

THE END.

Read "IN EBONY LAND; or, A YANKEE BOY IN ABYSSINIA," by Allan Arnold, which will be the next number (602) of "Pluck and Luck."

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THINGS OF INTEREST.

In this country there are nearly four hundred thousand more boys than girls of fourteen years of age; at sixteen years of age, there are six thousand more girls than boys; at eighteen there are twenty-four thousand more girls than boys. At twenty-four and twenty-five the sexes are about equal, then the women begin to grow less with great rapidity. At thirty, there are seventy-eight thousand more men than women, and at forty, eighty-three thousand.

It is true that the rattlesnake and the black snake are mortal enemies, and the black snake is the victor in their battles, breaking the neck of his adversary before the rattler has time to strike. The black snakes of this country are as harmless as frogs. On many of the large plantations in the South they are tamed and kept as a protection from their enemy, as the warm climate prevents keeping the houses closed so as to keep them out.

The Southern Pacific Railroad Company recently opened a large new clubhouse for employees at Roseville. This makes the fourth clubhouse opened, others being at Yuma and Tucson, Ariz., and at Dunsmuir, Cal. The clubs are provided with baths, libraries, billiard and pool tables, reading-rooms, barber shops and cafes. Meals are furnished at cost, lodgings for 15 cents, baths for 10 cents, and pool 5 cents a game. All other privileges are free. The company has found that these clubhouses are greatly appreciated.

Like the Bank of England, the Bank of France is now guarded every night by soldiers. But within quite recent time the officials at the French bank resorted to a very novel method of protecting their bullion. This consisted in engaging masons to wall up the doors of the vaults in the cellar with hydraulic mortar as soon as the money was deposited each day in these receptacles. The water was then turned on and kept running until the whole cellar was flooded. A burglar would be obliged to work in a diving suit and break down a cement wall before he could even begin to plunder the vaults. When the bank officials arrived the next morning the water was drawn off, the masonry torn down, and the vaults opened.

The ringing of bells is a popular custom throughout Europe, and practically every hamlet in England has its peal of church bells. About the beginning of the sixteenth century sets of bells, generally eight in number, began to be hung in many

of the prominent churches in England, but the first true peal was presented to King's College, Cambridge, in 1456, by Pope Calixtus III. In Scotland, Ireland and Wales there are a number of ancient bells, many of the earlier ones being made quadrangular in shape. These are of iron plates hammered thin and riveted together. Probably the oldest of the four-sided bells is that of St. Patrick, in Belfast, which has gold, precious stones and silver filigree work in its ornamentation. On the Continent are a number of bells that date back for centuries. At the Monastery of St. Gall, in Switzerland, a rectangular-mouthed bell exists, similar to those of the British Isles, which belonged to the Irish missionary, St. Gallus. The first great bell of Moscow, which is famous through the world, was cast in 1733. It has a circumference of sixty feet, stands nearly twenty feet in height, has a shell two feet thick, and weighs approximately 200 tons. For a number of years it has stood in a public square and is now used as a chapel.

OUR COMIC COLUMN.

"Got a talking-machine at home?" "Yes." "What did you pay for it?" "Nothing. Married it."

"How did you get that black eye, Pat?" Pat—Sure, your reverence, I slept on my fist last night!

Bung—So you have succeeded in tracing back my ancestors? What is your fee? Genealogist—Twenty guineas for keeping quiet about them.

Mr. Citiman (who has taken board on a farm)—Is there a bank anywhere near here? Farmer Catchum—No, sir. We ain't never had no use for banks in this section. You see, this is the first season any of us has kept summer boarders.

"So you don't guide hunting parties any more?" "Nope," said the guide. "Got tired of being mistook fer a deer." "How do you earn a living now?" "Guide fishin' parties. So fer nobody ain't mistook me fer a fish."

"Pa, who was Shylock?" "Great goodness, boy! You attend church and Sunday-school every week and don't know who Shylock was?" cried his father, with a look of surprise and horror. "Go and read your Bible, sir!"

Overworked Housewife—I wish to get a servant. Employment Agent—Well, madam, we have some elegant ones who wish a trip to Europe, some less desirable who would summer at Saratoga, and a few cheap ones who do not object to Long Branch. Which do you prefer?

Tommy had been reading a great deal in the newspapers about senators and congressmen, the tariff bill, income taxes and corporation taxes, and his mind was filled with legislative matters. On many occasions his father had explained, as best he could, the articles of which the newspapers treated, and took pains to voice his opinion, which was not always favorable. With his mind so actively fertilized and growing, Tommy could not help asking his father one day: "Say, pop, why is a senator like a counterfeiter?" "That's too strong for me," replied his father. "What's the answer?" "Because," answered Tommy, triumphantly, "he makes and tries to pass some pretty bad bills."

A PLOT FOR A PEERAGE

By D. W. STEVENS.

A peer of England was dying. At his couch were all the celebrated physicians of the day with their attendants—men whose skill in medicine was unequaled upon the globe, yet who were powerless to avert the grim decree of the destroying angel.

Sir Stephen Strathford was indeed near his end. And yet he was by no means an old man. The old story—cut off in the prime of life—forty-five—all the result of an unfortunate hunting accident. Somewhat remarkably, the dying man had spells of sanity up to the hour of his death.

His son and only living heir, Sumner, a lieutenant of the Grenadier Guards, and a handsome, talented youth, a graduate of Oxford, with his other accomplishments, had received the dire news of his father's approaching dissolution in Geneva, and had at once hastened home, in time to drop tears of sorrow upon the dying couch of his father.

It was a sad blow to the young man, and he followed the remains of the earl to his grave with the sincere sorrow of a true and noble son.

He was obliged to resign his commission in the army now, and succeed to the proprietorship of one of England's noblest heritages, Strathford Hall.

Two days before Earl Strathford's death, in a dingy barrister's office in London, a man sat with feet perched upon the desk, with his hat pulled down low over his eyebrows, apparently wrapped in meditation, his gaze directed out of the window.

Austin Rexford had once been heir to a grand estate, Rexford Towers, Sussex, but had squandered his inheritance, and was now gaining a precarious subsistence at the bar.

He was in doubt, extremely in doubt, as to where the money was coming from to settle up various bills pending over him, and so engrossed did he become in his reflections that he unconsciously lapsed into audible soliloquy.

"Yes, I am poorer than a church mouse," he mused. "As my good tutor would once have said, the result of reckless dissipation. Ah, well, the thing must have a turn some time. The man who is at the bottom of the wheel to-day is apt to gain the top to-morrow. To think what a lucky dog that Strathford is."

He stroked his long mustache savagely.

"And to think that we are so nearly related," he continued. "Only cousins. By jove! How curious it would have been!"

Involuntarily his evilly handsome face assumed a devilish expression, while his cat-like eyes scintillated strangely.

"Supposing Sumner Strathford did not come home? Supposing some unknown assassin put an end to his earthly career?"

Hard and evil now the expression which came over Austin Rexford's face. So intent had he become in his reverie that he had not heard the opening of his door, and the soft tread of an intruder, until a voice hissed sibilantly in his ear:

"Then you would be the master of Strathford Hall!"

Had a bomb exploded at his feet, Austin Rexford could not have been more surprised. Like lightning he sprang to his feet. Before him cowered a man. Clad in seedy garb—a burly, ruffianly, yet slovenly-looking individual.

"Stebbins!" ejaculated Rexford, in a tone of astonishment. "You here?"

"Begging your pardon, sir," whimpered the man, rubbing his shriveled hands, "I was in Lunnon, sur, and could not help stepping in, sur, to see the son of my old master, sur. Hope I do not intrude?"

At first Rexford's face had grown black as a thundercloud.

But now the expression faded away beneath the influence of a strange emotion, and he queried in a terse voice:

"What right had you to enter my office so much like a sneak? Did you overhear what I said?"

The man's eyes glistened. Cyril Stebbins had been a former gardener at Rexford Towers, when Austin had there held his sway. He was a shrewd, though a trifle vacillating, old villain, and had figured with Sir Austin in not a few disgraceful scrapes:

"Did I, sur?" he whimpered, then lowering his voice: "Indeed, sur, I would give my right hand to see you master of Strathford."

Austin Rexford started back, and again his evil face turned black. A powerful wave of emotion seemed to sweep over him. He gazed out of the window a moment, while he seemed to be mastering some strong impulse. Then he wheeled, and clutched Stebbins almost fiercely by the shoulder.

His voice had a hissing accent as he exclaimed in a sibilant tone:

"Stebbins, do you mean what you say?"

"I do."

"What will you sacrifice to see me master of Strathford? Will you, with promise of fair remuneration, risk a deed which calls for a hand of iron and a nerve of steel?"

The old man looked steadily through his blurred eyes at Rexford. Slowly through his brain, befuddled with bad whisky, comprehension of the other's meaning made its way.

"Hic!" he articulated, "you may depend upon me, Sir Austin. I understand what you mean. Sir Sumner must not reach Strathford."

"That's it, Stebbins," said Rexford, lowering his voice. "Can you do it?"

The old man nodded his head slowly.

"There is a grove of trees," he said, "in the edge of the Strathford demesne. I will be there when the young lord rides that way. Never fear, Sir Austin, I will be there, and make the work sure!"

Austin Rexford's face assumed an expression of exultation.

"Stebbins," he said, "you shall be the bailiff of Strathford if you make the work sure. I will meet you in the woods to-morrow night after the deed is done. You will be there?"

"I will," affirmed the wretch again.

The murderous compact was sealed. A murderous plot against the life of the true heir of Strathford, at that moment hastening home to attend his dead father's funeral.

Little he knew, as he mounted a horse at the station and galloped into the dark Sussex woods that evening, what dreadful fate lay awaiting him, what fearful danger hung over his path!

Until, when near to the end of the wood, a pistol shot rang out upon the air, and the doomed heir reeled from his horse and fell in the roadway. From a neighboring thicket the burly form of a man sprang, bent over the lifeless form a moment, and then, lifting him high in his powerful arms, bore the fated lord to the railing of a bridge which spanned a deep defile in the wood, through which dashed a foaming torrent, and down into this he was cast.

A few moments later, at the foot of a wide-spreading chestnut, almost within sight of the Hall, Stebbins met the schemer Rexford.

"The thing is all right, my lord," he said, with a hideous leer. "And you are free to claim Strathford Hall as your own."

* * * * *

The duties of an English detective vary from those of American representatives of the profession in the fact that their field of operations affords less scope, and their cases are consequently more intricate, and call for the exercise of more shrewdness than their Yankee brethren.

A connoisseur in the profession, and one whose name ranks among the highest of London talent, is Charles Bigsby, of the Scotland Yard corps.

He is a short, dapper little man, with a keen, penetrating eye, but would scarce be taken for a detective, so diminutive is he in appearance.

Yet no keener sleuth-hound of justice ever set forth upon the trail of a criminal than Charles Bigsby.

A week after the mysterious disappearance of the young heir of Strathford he was sitting in his office, engaged in the assortment of a pile of papers concerning a particular case which he was at work upon, when there came a rap upon the door, and an attendant thrust a letter in.

Bigsby took it, and broke the seal. It was a dainty white missive, and penciled in a feminine hand.

"Mr. Bigsby.—I would see you at the Hall immediately. Come without delay.—Alice Heathwood."

Heathwood Hall was one of the finest estates in Sussex. Without delay Bigsby hastened to answer the summons, and a few hours later stood in the grand reception-room.

Alice Heathwood was a beautiful girl—fair and slender in form, with lustrous brown eyes and wavy hair. She had been betrothed to Sumner Strathford, and the news of his mysterious disappearance had been a fearful shock to her.

"Oh, Mr. Bigsby!" she exclaimed, clasping her hands as she entered the reception-room. "Oh, it is so horrible. Something dreadful has happened to Sumner. I had a terrible dream. Something tells me that he has been murdered."

Bigsby strove to comfort the fears of the excited girl, and assured her that he would at once take the case in hand. It pained him much to see the great distress of the afflicted maiden. When he left, an hour later, he did not go immediately to the station, but turned aside into the grounds of Strathford Hall.

For three weeks a dark, silent form hung about at night time, flitting through the grounds like a dark phantom.

It was Bigsby, the detective, in pursuit of his clew.

And Austin Rexford, now the lord of Strathford, plunged into the wildest of dissipation.

Bigsby kept steadily at work. And fortune aided his plans.

He played a cunning trick upon the pseudo bailiff Stebbins.

The clever detective hit upon an idea to discover whether or not the maudlin wretch was instrumental in the disappearance of the young lord.

One night, when it was exceedingly dark, with numerous effects with him in a small bag to aid his purpose, he waylaid the rascally bailiff in the dark wood where the murder had transpired. Stebbins, about midnight, came stumbling along the road, beastly drunk.

When he had got near to the bridge from which Sumner Strathford had been thrown a horrible fantastic figure, representing the Old Nick himself, stepped from a thicket and confronted the affrighted scoundrel.

A veritable demon the detective had made of himself, with the aid of phosphorus and a pair of gleaming horns, and the masquerade had a magical effect upon Stebbins. Veritably believing his last hour at hand, he fell upon his knees in the road and began to howl in terror.

"Shut up!" commanded the specter, "or I will consign thee to the depths of my abode. Art thou that man Stebbins?"

"Yes, yes," groaned the terrified wretch. "Oh, don't kill me—don't kill me!"

"Art thou the man who murdered the Earl of Strathford? Speak!" and the specter made a threatening dive at the affrighted wretch.

Paralyzed with terror, the maudlin villain made a full confession of his complicity in the crime, and the cunning scheme

of Austin Rexford. After which the specter allowed him to go his way.

The next morning Stebbins, of course, attributed the vision to an attack of delirium tremens.

In his own mind Bigsby was now assured of the guilty party, but how to prove this constituted a knotty problem.

However, he did not give up, but kept steadily at work, until one day a dispatch reached him at London. Thus it was worded:

"Come at once to Heathwood. Important development.

"A. H."

That night Bigsby again ran out to Sussex in obedience to the summons. He met Alice Heathwood at the door, a radiant smile upon her face.

An hour later a strange party left the doors of Heathwood and were driven to Strathford. Six in number they were, and closely muffled.

Austin Rexford was in the library when there came a ring at the door. A few moments later, unbidden, six closely muffled forms strode into the apartment.

Then the first threw aside his covering and stood revealed, while Rexford recoiled against the wall in unmitigated horror.

The heir of Strathford, Sumner Strathford, in the flesh stood before him!

"You here?" gasped the usurper and would-be murderer.

"Yes. I did not die from that well-nigh fatal shot, Austin," said Strathford, calmly. "By the mercy of Heaven I lived, and have come to claim my own."

Like a flash the villain's assurance came back.

"I am very glad," he said, simperingly, "that you were not. Who could have been so evil-minded as to have attempted such a fiendish act?"

"Enough!" said the young heir, with a wave of his hand. "I know all, Austin. You are my cousin, and have sought to defraud me of my life and property. Officers, do your duty!"

Three of the remaining intruders threw aside their covering and disclosed themselves as officers. These advanced and laid hands upon the doomed usurper.

His reign was over. Strathford Hall was returned to its lawful owner.

Rexford and Stebbins, the two conspirators, were taken to London. Stebbins made a confession, and both were convicted and sentenced to penal servitude in Tasmania.

Bigsby, the plucky detective, received a liberal reward for his services and skillful work. The sudden appearance of Sumner Strathford in the flesh may be explained in a simple manner.

After being thrown from the bridge, the transfer into the water brought on a reaction when he came out of his insensibility. The shot had not been a fatal one, and he had strength enough left to swim ashore. But a slow fever had set in and kept him a prisoner upon a couch in the cot of an humble farmer in the adjoining parish. For many reasons he had not disclosed his identity.

A gamekeeper from Heathwood had discovered his presence there, and this had brought about the developments already chronicled.

And right glad was Strathford's true love, Alice Heathwood, to welcome her lover back to life again, and she did not delay in communicating the news to Bigsby.

Thus all came out happily in the end for the wronged, and the evildoers had justice meted out to them according to their deserts.

A colored girl in the country went into a store kept by a colored woman. This was their preliminary conversation: "Yuh ain't got no caliker, is yuh?" "Who says I ain't?" "I ain't ax yuh 'Ain't yuh?' I ax'd yuh 'Is yuh?'"

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